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ABSTRACT

This case study presents findings of a year-long ethnographic study of a principal of a suburban elementary school. It concludes one of seven studies conducted in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings that investigated the instructional management role of principals. Data collection involved hundreds of hours of observation of principals' activities and interviews with students, teachers, and principals. The school under study was characterized by a predominantly white, well-to-do student body; poor community relations; and faculty conflict. The principal focused on changing the school's work culture to improve school climate, devoting most of his time to scheduling, organizing, allocating resources, and communicating the work structure to school staff. He also improved community relations and used informal modeling to create an environment conducive to academic success. This series of studies has found that principals can significantly change their schools' instructional systems and thereby affect the social and academic experiences of students. Thirteen figures are included. Contains 64 references. (LMI)

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UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO INSTRUCTION:

SEVEN PRINCIPALS, SEVEN STORIES

Case #7:

Louis Wilkens,

Principal of a Suburban Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This case study presents the findings from a yearlong, ethnographic study of a principal of a suburban elementary school. It concludes one of a series of studies in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings undertaken to investigate the instructional management role of principals.

Although previous research has offered disparate views about the potency of principals as instructional leaders and managers, this series of studies has found that principals can significantly alter the instructional systems of their schools and thereby affect the social and academic experiences of students.

Through hundreds of hours of observation of principals' activities and through interviews with students, teachers, and principals about the antecedents and consequences of principals' activities, we have construed principals' seemingly chaotic behavior as purposive action. In our analysis of principals' routine actions, patterns emerge that reveal the importance of these actions in creating and maintaining instructional climates and organizations that are responsive to an array of contextual factors.

FOREWORD

> In the past decade public educators have had to learn how to cope with three kinds of scarcity: pupils, money, and public confidence. Of the three shortages perhaps the most unsettling has been the decline in confidence in a profession that for so long had millennial aspirations of service to the nation. (Tyack & Hansot, 1984, p. 33)

Those of us who care about and watch our schools cannot help but notice that the buildings and the students have changed. We need only listen to the experiences that our children report nightly around the dinner table in order to conclude, not always happily, that things are different today. The media report violence in the schools, poor student achievement, and disappointing facts about the preparation and performance of teachers. And recently, a panel of educational leaders, appointed in 1981 by Secretary of Education Bell, concluded that our schools have deteriorated to such an extent that "our nation is at risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Into this troubled arena--into its very center--the school principal has been thrust by those who have studied "effective" schools (e.g., Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Weber, 1971; Wynne, 1981). These researchers have successfully resurrected an old maxim: effective principal, effective school. Some proponents of this work have been very explicit about their faith in the capacity of the school principal. One supporter has asserted that:

> One of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is strong administrative leadership, without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together. (Edmonds, 1979, p. 32)

Thus, school principals find themselves in the spotlight, expected to shoulder successfully the awesome responsibility of school reform.

Is this a fair expectation? While the effective-school researchers have stressed the importance of the principal in the process of school improvement, other investigators have argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with the improvement of instruction (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979). Similarly, our own reviews of the effective-schools research have recommended caution about its conclusions (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983). And at the very time that these scholars are proclaiming the potency of the principal as an instructional leader, principals themselves report decreases in their power and autonomy as school leaders. School administrators claim to make fewer decisions regarding instruction at the building level and they express feelings of isolation (Goldhammer, 1971). And as the theoretical debate continues, principals are being held accountable for students' academic performance and achievement scores. In some instances, parent groups are demanding the removal of principals who lead schools where children perform below expectations on standardized achievement tests.

The Instructional Management Program of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development was created to examine critically the role of the principal in the development and execution of successful instructional programs. We began our work by questioning the common assertions of the effective-schools research. For example, as a basic query, we asked: If successful principals are those who create schools where the climate is safe and orderly, where basic skills are emphasized, where teachers hold high expectations for their students, and where instructional programs are tied closely to carefully monitored objectives, what do principals do to institute and maintain those conditions?

We began our effort to address this question with a careful review of an array of educational and organizational literatures. Subsequently, we suggested a theoretical model that related individual and contextual variables to the behavior of principals, and we speculated about how those behaviors might influence the instructional organization and social climate of a school and, in turn, affect student outcomes (see Bossert et al., 1982).

Guided by our theoretical conception, we then spoke with 32 principals from the San Francisco Bay Area about their work. These long, open-ended interviews produced a wealth of information about the principals' own perceptions of how their behavior as instructional leaders or managers was influenced by their communities, districts, and personal histories. These men and women described their schools' climates and instructional organizations and discussed their efforts to shape the form and the content of instruction and to color the ambience of their schools. From these preliminary forays into the worlds of school administrators, we received a very strong impression: Principals work under diverse conditions and pressures, and they pursue solutions that affect instruction and student achievement in many different ways.

For us, the public's demand for the improvement of schools and instruction, the ongoing argument about the principal's role, and the promise we saw in the principals' own views about their activities merited an intensive effort to work with principals in their schools. As collaborators, we wanted to gain a realistic understanding of their role and of the limits of their responsibility in attaining more effective schools.

Probing the Workaday World of Principals

As a first step in achieving such an understanding, we invited five of the 32 principals whom we had interviewed to join us in an eight-week pilot study. Our purpose was to observe principals in action, validating their spoken stories on the one hand and gaining direct knowledge of their activities on the other. The five principals represented Blacks and Whites of both sexes from schools with diverse student populations, differing socioeconomic contexts, and varied approaches to instructional management. As we studied these principals, we were able to field-test our primary data-gathering procedures--the shadow and the reflective interview--which were to allow us access to the personal meanings that principals attached to their actions (the design and results of this pilot study are fully discussed in Five Principals in Action: Perspectives on Instructional Management, Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). Our intent during this phase of our program's work was to listen to how principals described both their role in instruction and the conditions and events shaping that role.

After the pilot phase, we contacted 12 more principals, this time selected from urban, suburban, and rural schools, to help us extend our understanding of instructional leadership and management through a yearlong study of their activities. These individuals had all been nominated as successful principals by their superiors. They varied by gender, age, ethnicity, and experience. Their schools ran the gamut from rural to urban, small to large, poor to rich, traditional to innovative. For hundreds of hours we watched the activities of these principals, looking for the consequences of their actions for teachers and students throughout their schools. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a thorough treatment of participant selection, data-gathering procedures, and analysis of data).

A Potent Role in Instructional Management

As we watched our experienced principals perform their daily activities, we also witnessed the uncertain environments with which they coped. We saw that the decreases in the number of students, financial resources, and public confidence to which Tyack and Hansot refer did have an effect on schools. In addition, we documented demographic shifts that moved students in and out of schools at alarming rates; court actions that had administrators, board members, and teachers looking over their shoulders; and a changing political climate that affected the very conception of what schooling might be. All of these were significant factors in the schools in which we worked. The reality is that educators work in shifting environments that are difficult to predict. Further, there is no reason to believe that the conditions contributing to this uncertainty will disappear.

Against this backdrop, the importance of the principal's role and the limitations principals face became apparent. Figure 1 (see page v) illustrates the principal's key position, bridging context and school, policy and program, means and ends. The principal's importance emerges from that position. He or she has the greatest access to the wishes and needs of district leaders, parents and community members, school staff, and students. With experience and training, he or she has the best opportunity to formulate an image of schooling that is relevant and responsive to those groups and to begin to bring that image into being. We believe that this is exactly what our principals were about: Through routine activities they attempted to bring to life their overarching visions, while at the same time monitoring their systems to keep these visions relevant.

Our principals demonstrated their abilities to tap the wishes and resources of their communities and districts. We observed their capacities to be sensitive to the needs of their students and staffs. But what we found most impressive was their ability to create and sustain an image of what quality schooling might be. Through all of the uncertainty and conflict that characterized their environments, these principals worked to instill their visions in their staffs and patrons, defining a mission in which all might participate. We believe that this may be their most potent role.

Seven Principals, Seven Stories

From our yearlong study of the activities of principals in their schools, we have prepared seven case studies. Each study portrays how the principal is influenced by his or her context. Each study also describes how the principal set about improving or maintaining the instructional program in his or her school. Together, the studies demonstrate the complexities and subtleties of the principal's role. This series contains the stories of:

1. Emma Winston, Principal of an Inner-City Elementary School;
2. Frances Hedges, Principal of an Urban Elementary School;
3. Ray Murdock, Principal of a Rural Elementary School;

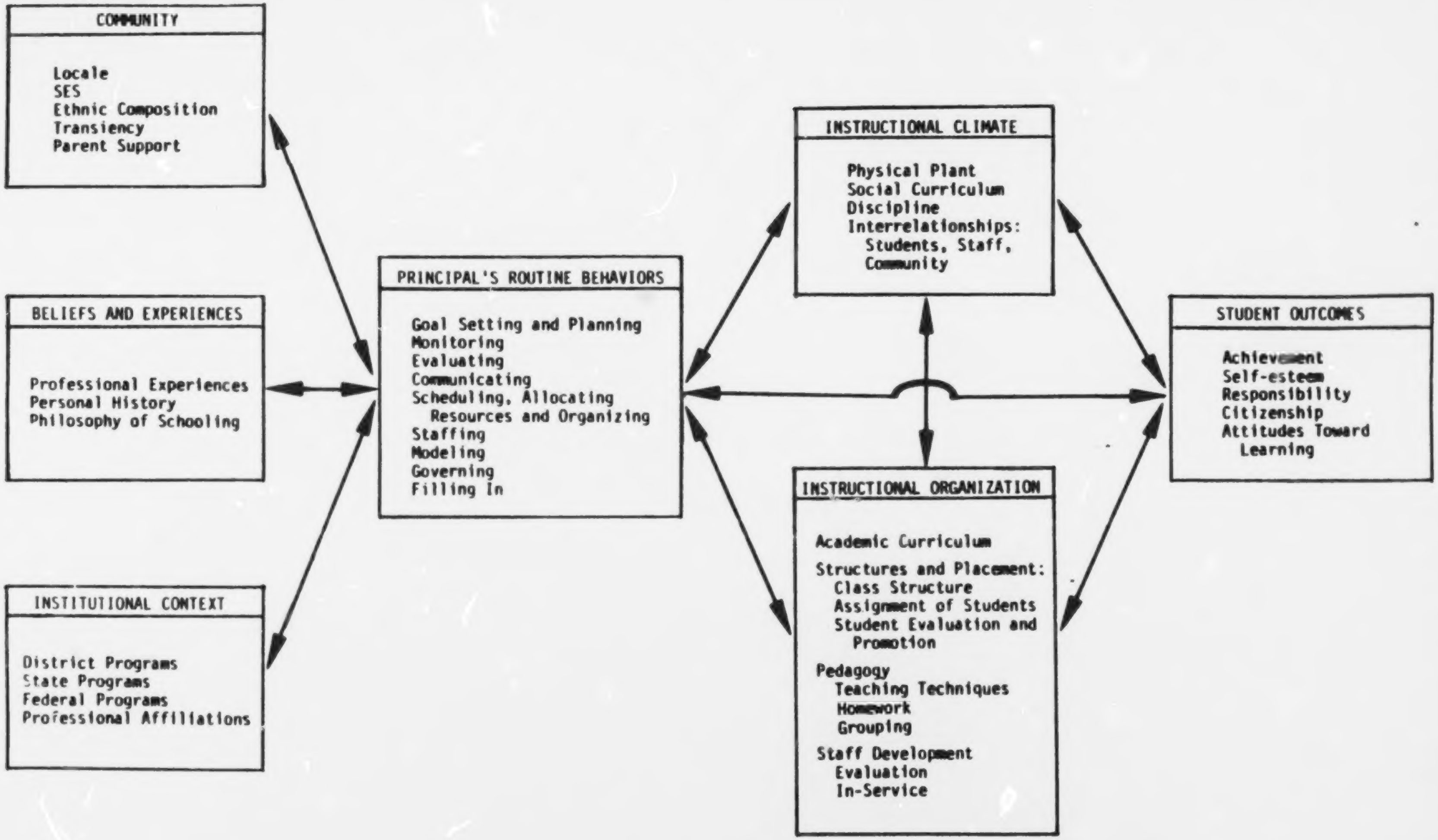
COMMUNITY
Locale
SES
Ethnic Composition
Transiency
Parent Support
BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES
Professional Experiences
Personal History
Philosophy of Schooling
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
District Programs
State Programs
Federal Programs
Professional Affiliations
PRINCIPAL'S ROUTINE BEHAVIORS
Goal Setting and Planning
Monitoring
Evaluating
Communicating
Scheduling, Allocating Resources and Organizing
Staffing
Modeling
Governing
Filling In
INSTRUCTIONAL CLIMATE
Physical Plant
Social Curriculum
Discipline
Interrelationships: Students, Staff, Community
INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION
Academic Curriculum
Structures and Placement:
Class Structure
Assignment of Students
Student Evaluation and Promotion
Pedagogy
Teaching Techniques
Homework
Grouping
Staff Development
Evaluation
In-Service
STUDENT OUTCOMES
Achievement
Self-esteem
Responsibility
Citizenship
Attitudes Toward Learning

Figure 1: The Principal's Role in Instructional Management

Principals can understand and influence the varied elements of their organizations through the performance of routine activities. Their success hinges on their ability to connect their actions to an overarching perspective of their school settings and their aspirations for students.

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4. Grace Lancaster, Principal of an Urban Junior High School;

5. Jonathan Rolf, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School;

6. Florence Barnhart, Principal of an Inner-City Junior High School;

7. Louis Wilkens, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School.

These principals were chosen because of their outstanding reputations and their willingness and their staffs' willingness to work for a year under the close scrutiny of our field workers. We were able to learn about instructional leadership and management from each of them, although their contributions to instruction differed markedly. Some were directly involved with setting the conditions of instruction--that is, working with their staffs to define and coordinate the what, when, where, and how of instruction. The contributions of others were more circuitous or behind the scenes. From those principals, we were able to understand better how some principals can set the conditions for instruction, providing school environments that are supportive of teachers' work and students' learning.

It is important to note, however, that none of these principals is a superhero. Each man and woman made significant contributions in the context of his or her own school, but each carried the foibles and idiosyncrasies that in some form burden us all. Each struggled with the day-to-day realities of his or her own limitations--personal and contextual. The stories will elicit strong feelings within their readers about the relative merit of these principals' actions. Readers will compare one principal to another and, more importantly, to themselves. And therein lies the relevance of these studies.

These cases are not presented as models for others to emulate; on the contrary, they are intended to stimulate personal reflection and to illustrate several lessons that we learned from the hundreds of hours we spent with these men and women and from our own comparisons of their work:

1. **Successful principals act with purpose.** They have an image in mind of the "good" school and of a way to make their school more like that image. They use this overarching perspective as a guide for their actions.

2. **Successful principals have a multi-faceted image of schools.** They recognize that schools comprise many interrelated social and technical elements--from community concerns and district mandates to student/staff relations and instructional strategies. Successful principals stand at the vortex of these

sometimes competing elements, balancing and guiding their organizations toward their goals.

3. **Successful principals use routine behaviors to progress incrementally toward their goals.** Principals are busy people doing many things simultaneously. They design their routines to achieve their purposes. They work smarter, not harder.

4. **The IMP Framework, as it has evolved through the field work, illustrates these conclusions about successful principals.** This framework, shown in Figure 1, provides a useful heuristic device to help people understand the role of the principal.

5. **All principals engage in the same kinds of behavior.** The verbs listed in the "routine behaviors" box of Figure 1 were common to all the principals studied. Furthermore, these routine behaviors were used with similar frequency. Communication accounted for the largest proportion of each principal's actions.

6. **The form and function of principals' routine behaviors varies to suit their contexts and purposes.** Despite the similarity in the categories and frequency of principals' routine behaviors, the variation in their actions becomes apparent when principals are observed at work in their schools. The case studies illustrate this principle in detail, leading to the premise that there is no single image or simple formula for successful instructional leadership.

We believe that researchers, practicing principals, and educators planning futures in school administration will find these volumes provocative.

Although the cases portray seven unique stories, we have chosen to structure them along parallel lines to encourage readers to compare and contrast contextual antecedents, principals' actions, and consequences across them. Each will begin with an orientation to the setting, which describes the school, community, patrons, school staff, and principal. The introduction concludes with a narrative of a day in the life of the principal, enlivening the descriptive information about the school by illustrating how the principal deals with typical situations in his/her setting.

The second section of each study begins by delineating the social and academic goals held by the principal and staff in the school, then describes the elements of the instructional climate and instructional organization that have been created to accomplish those goals. Throughout this section, the role of the principal is underscored by the words of teachers and students from the setting, by the principal's own words, and by the observations of the field researcher assigned to the school.

The final section of each study analyzes the principal's activities, drawing information from the descriptive sections to build and support models that explain the direct and indirect strategies and actions employed by the principals to affect instruction in their schools.

One last note: We are aware of the long-standing debate about whether principals are best described as middle-level managers, coordinating people, materials, and time to meet their institutions' goals, or whether principals are best construed as leaders, wearing the lenses of their own experiences and values, sharing their visions of means and ends, and enlisting support to accomplish their goals. From our experiences with principals, we do not feel that the leader/manager distinction helps us better understand their work. We saw our principals act sometimes like leaders, sometimes like managers; many times, however, we could attribute either role to their actions. Reflecting the overlapping nature of these role distinctions in the day-to-day actions of principals, we use the words interchangeably throughout these studies.

Acknowledgements

There is a multitude of people to thank for their contributions to this extensive study. The principals, staffs, and students who freely gave their energy, graciously tolerated our presence, and patiently answered our questions over the period of a school year are first and foremost on this list. Our agreement to protect their anonymity, however, prevents us from listing these important contributors by name (all proper names used in the case studies are fictional). It is self-evident that the project would not have been possible without their goodwill and their sense of responsibility to our efforts.

Next, 11 research interns in three states spent over 1,500 hours in these schools. They trained and prepared for each phase of data-gathering, relentlessly applied each procedure, and performed the necessary and painstaking documentation procedures after each of their school visits and observations. All of the interns were graduate students who had to weave our program's research activities into their already crowded personal agendas. Alphabetically, they were: Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Steven Foster, Susan Goodwin, Albert Kuipers, Patricia Kunke, Maralee Mayberry, Barbara McEvoy, Gail Mladejovesky, Susana Munzell, Sherri Schulke, and John Wilson. The twelfth field researcher was Ginny Lee, a research associate of the Instructional Management Program, who wore multiple hats throughout the project, including site coordinator, writer/editor, and planning and training assistant.

An extremely competent secretarial staff, which included Sharon Hansen, Peter Grace, Ann Wallgren, Carrie Kojimoto, and Claudia Long, monitored and filed data, made sure that interns kept up with the necessary bureaucratic work, and transcribed--

painfully--a seemingly endless stream of interviews. The program would have floundered early on without their consistent support.

As the project's field phase was completed, several staff members took on new roles and additional staff joined the program to assist with the development of the computerized data base, analysis, writing, and/or final document preparation. Christine Baker, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry read and re-read hundreds of pages of data, assisted in the development of our tagging scheme, and entered text data into the computer system implemented by Patricia Terry. Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry made invaluable contributions in the preliminary phases of the writing of the case studies. In the last critical phase, Jean Barker and Kenneth Warren wrote final copy and oversaw production of the eight-volume set.

My colleagues, Bruce Barnett, Steven Bossert, Nikola Filby, Ginny Lee, and Brian Rowan each contributed their expertise to the design and implementation of these studies. They, in conjunction with Carrie Kojimoto, assumed major analytical and writing tasks as our ambitions to fully utilize the rich data set grew and grew.

Lastly, the National Institute of Education funded this study during an era of tight resources, supported the program's efforts throughout, and helped create the visibility and professional networks that will ensure the use of this project's findings. Michael Cohen and Marianne Amarel were the project's monitors, and we especially thank them for understanding the utility of this kind of in-depth study and for supporting the project during every phase of its development.

David C. Dwyer
Project Director

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING AND ITS ACTORS

An Overview

The first section of this study attempts to give the reader a general impression of Berry Hill Elementary School and its context. We believe that this narrative introduction is necessary if the reader is to understand fully the description and analysis of the instructional system presented in the subsequent sections of the study. The introduction itself begins with an account of the physical characteristics of the school and the surrounding community. This account is followed by a description of the school's students and parents. Next, the general characteristics of the school's teachers are delineated. The focus then turns to the school's principal, telling in brief his history, his educational philosophy, and his thoughts about the role of a principal. Having shaded in these broader contours, we subsequently take the reader through a day in the life of the principal, recounting in as much detail as possible what he encountered during a typical day at school.

The School and Its Context

Berry Hill's location made it unusual among schools in this large urban district. Unlike its sister schools, which were located in industrial or business areas, Berry Hill sat on a steep, wooded hill rising above the city. The setting was that of a mountain retreat (SO, 9/7/82, p. 1).*

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*Throughout these sections, the reader will encounter parenthetic notations describing the type of data cited, the date of collection, and the page number of the record from which the quotation was taken. The abbreviations used to identify the data types are: FN for field notes; SO for summary observations; TI for tape-recorded interviews; I for interviews that were not transcribed verbatim; IOI for Instructional Organization Instrument; SDI for School Description Instrument; SFI for School Features Inventory; and Doc. for documents that were produced within the broad instructional system in which each school was embedded. (For further explanation of these varied data, see the companion volume, Methodology.) For example, a quotation taken from an interview on October 8, 1982 would be followed by: (TI, 10/8/82, p. 34).

The main building occupied the back corner of a four-tiered lot, which was, quite literally, carved out of the hillside. A fenced play yard made up the lowest tier, and two more play yards constituted the second tier. The smaller yard on the second level contained portable buildings for kindergarten classes and special resource facilities. Stairs from the play yards ascended to a long ramp which extended from the school's front door on the third level downward to the street. On the school's uppermost level was its parking lot, some 35 wooden steps above the second-tier play yards. Children often warned visitors that this older stairway became "slippery when it rain[ed]" (SO, 9/7/82, p. 3).

The students, however, found the stairways and hilly surroundings challenging. Adventurous youngsters sometimes gained further heights by scaling a retaining wall along the rear of the school lot. This wall, 20 feet tall in some places, provided access to a forbidden lunchtime and recess retreat--a heavily wooded hill honeycombed by paths which these young explorers found irresistible (TI, 5/19/83, pp. 13-15).

This unusual setting, however, did not extend to the unimaginative and drab interior of the school building itself. Steps echoed hollowly in the long, central hallway, which formed the spine of the Berry Hill school building and linked the school's library, book room, principal's office, and ten classrooms. Bulletin boards displaying students' work and large, colorful circles painted around classroom doors failed to brighten the dark tones of the hall's gray tile floors and plywood-panel walls (FN, 9/7/82, pp. 5-6).

At the upper end of the hall, adjacent to the principal's office, was a large, windowless room, which was used as a cafeteria and assembly hall. For most of the day the room was bare, but in preparation for the daily onslaught of hungry, exuberant children, six built-in tables were pulled from the walls and a trash bin placed at the room's center. Teachers dined in a lounge, which could be reached from the cafeteria by walking through a small lobby. The lounge, too, was sparsely furnished--a worn, white and gold sofa and a few chairs scattered about a central, rectangular table provided the only seating. At the beginning of the year, two bulletin boards in the lounge carried a single message: "Keep this room clean, or else!" (FN, 10/6/82, p. 2).

This same bare-boned condition prevailed throughout the school. Classrooms contained the usual desks, tables, and file cabinets, all of which were old and worn. Rarely were frills visible, although one classroom had a few math games scattered on a table, another was home to a hamster in a small cage, and a third was brightened by yellow Japanese kites, suspended from the ceiling (FN, 4/18/83, p. 3). None, however, brimmed with instructional materials nor evoked wonder from the casual passerby. Even the library was barren, its overall drabness broken only by a few colorful posters extolling the virtues of books (FN, 1/12/83, p. 9).

In large part, no quantity of student art work, commercial posters, maps, or displays could hide the building's poor lighting, old paint, and cheap construction. The school's structural shortcomings and lack of materials were reminders that Berry Hill was, after all, part of a large, urban school system in which funding cutbacks and enrollment declines were annual events (FN, 9/7/82, p. 6).

The frugal condition of the Berry Hill school building contrasted with the wealth and style of the homes from which it drew its students. Like the school, these family dwellings nestled into the heavily wooded hillside, their various designs conforming to the contours and features of the land. The similarity, however, ended there. The owners of these homes were of professional or white-collar status, and each home seemed a statement of financial stability (FN, 9/7/82, pp. 1-2).

Louis Wilkens, newly arrived principal at the school, related to us how his colleagues, aware of the school's clientele, had teased him about his "promotion to a very easy school" (FN, 3/22/83, p. 3). Berry Hill was known throughout the district as one of the "hill schools" (SO, 9/7/82, p. 3), a term which, Wilkens explained, referred not only to the topography of the setting but to the high expectations that parents and teachers held for Berry Hill's children. But in the year prior to Wilkens's arrival, the school's students had failed to meet these expectations on district achievement tests (TI, 9/7/82, p. 20). Thus, Wilkens had known from the first that he would find a few briars in his new berry patch.

Community and staff relations at the school were also somewhat thorny. Although parents often dressed informally when visiting the school--jeans and plaid shirts were common attire (FN, 12/1/82, p. 1)--their casual appearance belied their sometimes abrasive manner. Concerned mothers and fathers levied frequent and harsh criticisms at the faculty. Their reactions to school issues were emotional, and their dissension spilled over to their children, who on occasion displayed haughty and contemptuous attitudes toward the teachers and expressed disregard for school rules. According to students, food fights had not been uncommon in the cafeteria (FN, 10/28/82, p. 4). At the beginning of Wilkens's first year at Berry Hill, this dissident tone prevailed even in the teachers' lounge where, during lunch, one-upmanship characterized faculty interactions--if conversations were pursued at all (FN, 9/21/82, p. 13).

Berry Hill's Students and Parents

Typically, many of Berry Hill's 300 students arrived at school sporting Izod shirts, designer jeans, crew-neck sweaters, and Nike shoes. The principal reported that about 71% of these youngsters were White, 23% were Black, 4% were Asian, and 2% had Spanish surnames (see Figure 2 below and SDI, 9/82, p. 2). The large White majority was uncommon to most schools in the district. As mentioned earlier, Berry Hill's parents occupied the higher socioeconomic strata: 15% professional, 70% semiprofessional, and 15% skilled/semiskilled (see Figure 3 below and SDI, 9/82, p. 2).

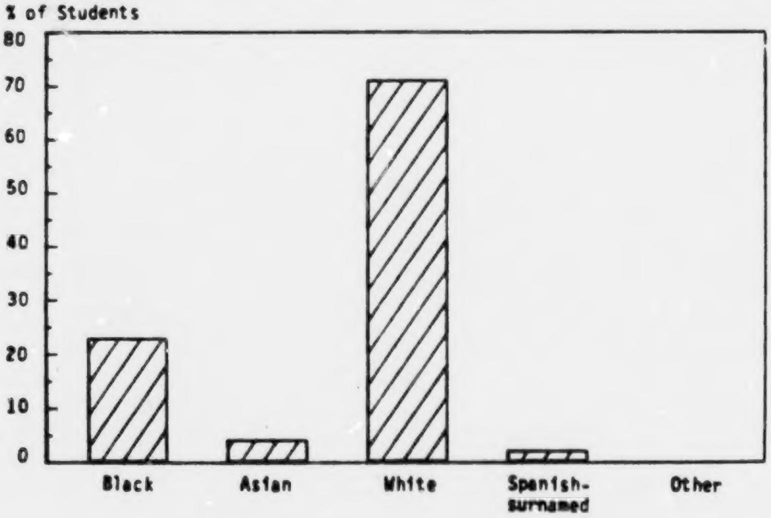

Figure 2: Student Ethnicity at Berry Hill

Teachers typified their students as bright but somewhat sloppy and lazy. The staff complained of ill-prepared homework and of their students' tendencies to whine whenever assignments were made (FN, 1/12/83, p. 12). Many said that they were reluctant to pursue rigorously any problems regarding homework because the parents failed to support their concerns (FN, 3/22/83, p. 4). One teacher reported that despite the prestige associated with the school's "Gifted and Talented" classes, students dropped out frequently because the program required additional work (FN, 5/12/83, p. 8).

Teachers also found that arguing points with students could be quite taxing (FN, 3/22/83, p. 4). According to Wilkens, this last difficulty could be attributed to the children's verbal facility. He explained:

> They aren't bad kids, but if you aren't careful, telling a student to sit down could result in a forty-five minute discussion as to why he should or shouldn't sit down. (FN, 3/22/83, p. 4)

Many teachers interpreted their students' apparent need to "discuss" each decision and each instruction as disrespect. Wilkens, however, was able to tap the verbal ability of the youngsters in achieving positive ends. By involving the students in constructive debate, he encouraged productive, industrious behavior in many individuals. For example, he put students in charge of determining which photography studio would be contracted to take class pictures for the school (FN, 2/16/83, p. 4). According to Wilkens, students handled the task admirably, attending to and debating detailed differences among several studios' offers. When students were photographed that year, the photographer was the one they had selected.

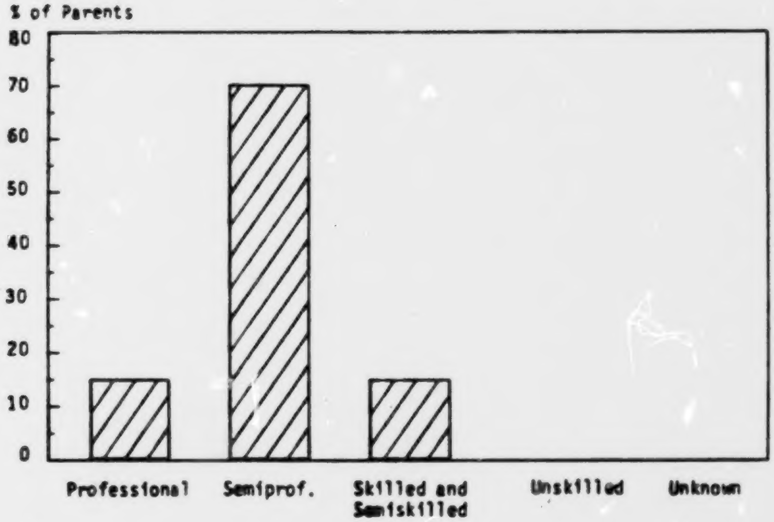

Figure 3: Employment Skill Level of Berry Hill's Parents

Whether labeled as "intrusive" and "argumentative" on the one hand, or "curious" and "assertive" on the other, it was not surprising that parents at the school elicited the same adjectives from Berry Hill's staff as did their children. On the whole, parents were quite willing to speak up when issues affected their children. And despite faculty complaints about lack of support on some issues, Berry Hill's parents were active at the school and contributed to the program in many ways. The Parent/Faculty Club conducted a yearlong paper drive, a walk-a-thon, a "Round-up and Barbeque," and a bazaar that featured parent-made craft products (FN, 10/4/82, p. 10; FN, 5/19/83, p. 2). Together, these fund raisers significantly supplemented Berry Hill's budget for instructional supplies. The proceeds supported the school's computer instruction program (including equipment and personnel) and the motor-development program. In addition, each classroom teacher received $50 for materials that would have been unavailable otherwise. The year prior to our study, the club's budget "excess" provided the funds to construct new play equipment for the school yards. It was estimated that 25% of the school's parents contributed time and effort to these activities (FN, 10/6/82, p. 8).

A core group of 30 parents from the club organized most of the fund raising activities. This same group spent a great deal of time at the school and tended to volunteer for other projects as well. For example, they staffed the school's "literary" magazine and planned and conducted the sixth-grade graduation program (FN, 10/28/82, pp. 8-11).

But this strong school support system and closely woven network of active parents worked against the school as well as for it. Certain members of this group watched all proceedings at the school carefully and were always ready to speak out when they discovered anything they did not like (FN, 11/18/82, p. 3; TI, 4/14/83, p. 4; TI, 4/14/83, p. 8). Teachers and even district personnel had identified these parents as "troublemakers." Moreover, other parents were antagonistic toward this subgroup and monitored its activities carefully, creating another faction. District board meetings and community meetings often became battle scenes when both groups were aroused. During the year of our study, their arguments over a new course at Berry Hill were spectacular enough to receive front-page coverage in the local newspaper; shouting matches over the issue seemed to erupt at any available forum (FN, 11/18/82, pp. 4-6). Staff veterans said that such conflicts were commonplace. Teachers reported to our fieldworker that they had seen this before and would see it again (FN, 11/18/82, p. 7; TI, 4/14/83, p. 4; TI, 4/14/83, p. 8).

Parental involvement at the school also created problems other than those mentioned above. Berry Hill's parents believed that the quality of instruction at the school varied from grade level to grade level. When their children reached a grade level where the teachers were generally regarded as below par academically, parents were quite willing to transfer their children to a neighboring elementary school whose classes were held in higher regard. Depending upon the reputations of teachers in the succeeding grade level, these same parents might transfer their children back to Berry Hill for the next year. This annual migration involved 10% of the school's students, creating a turnover problem in an otherwise stable community (TI, 9/7/82, p. 20). One of Wilkens's goals was to eliminate this movement by improving instruction within all grade levels at Berry Hill (FN, 9/21/82, p. 6; FN, 4/22/83, pp. 10-13). The instructional staff, a key element in Wilkens's plan, is the subject of the following section.

Berry Hill's Staff

Berry Hill's 10 teachers were a veteran group: Nine had more than 10 years' experience in education (four of these had taught for more than 20 years). Of these nine, one had been an elementary classroom teacher for only a year and a half but had spent five years as a guidance counselor and five years as a high school instructor. The tenth staff member had been teaching for eight years (see Figure 4 below).

Most of the staff had been employed at the school for some time. Eight had taught at Berry Hill for more than eight years. The guidance counselor turned elementary teacher had been at

Berry Hill for one and one half years. The teacher with the shortest tenure arrived at the school with Wilkens. Seven of these teachers were women; three were men. Seven were White, two were Asian, and one was Black (SDI, 9/82, p. 3; SO, 2/25/83, p. 5).

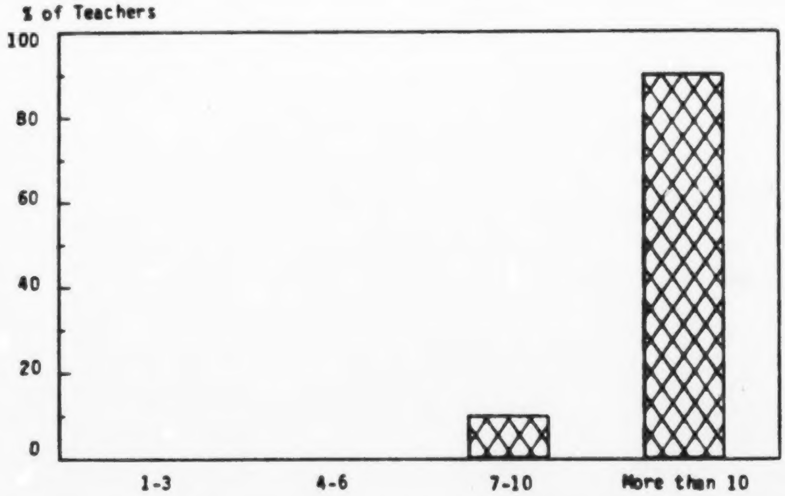

Figure 4: Years of Teaching Experience of Berry Hill's Staff

Although their individual styles and techniques varied widely, Berry Hill's teachers were quite loyal to one another when challenged from outside. For example, during the school year one of the staff was publicly criticized for using a curriculum that focused on personal values. Although other teachers did not necessarily agree with their colleague's approach, every one of them attended a parent meeting where they supported him and unanimously defended his instruction (FN, 12/1/82, p. 7).

Most of the staff also showed a dislike for the previous principal. Much of the in-group humor in the teachers' lounge touched on staff perceptions of the former principal as a domineering and demanding person who had failed as an administrator (FN, 9/8/82, pp. 1-2, 7). Teachers attributed years of pent-up tension to that principal and noted how they were more relaxed with Wilkens's leadership and presence. As the year progressed, our observer noted that the informal, after-school chatter among teachers increased markedly and the lunchtime conversations included less hurtful sparring and more talk about students and instructional projects and ideas (FN, 9/21/82, p. 13; FN, 12/1/82, pp. 7-9).

Even this small 10-teacher faculty, however, contained subgroups and individuals who worked on its fringes. Two subgroups had evolved naturally out of the new departmental work structure which Wilkens had inherited from the previous principal. According to the new structure, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders left their homerooms and rotated to different teachers for math and language arts. Thus, teachers in these grades shared most of the upper-grade students and were required to work together to coordinate their instructional programs. As a result of this new plan, this subgroup frequently discussed the academic status of some student or the work of the "blue group" or the "purple group" (FN, 11/12/82, p. 1).

The other subgroup, which was not as tightly knit, involved the primary grade levels. The formation of this group was the direct result of the efforts of the former guidance counselor. She encouraged teachers in the lower grade levels to share information with each other. She had also begun to bring the two most isolated members of the faculty into the fold (FN, 1/19/83, pp. 12-13).

Thus, the cleavages among the faculty that Wilkens had first perceived were not intractable. Increasingly, during this year of observation, the faculty coalesced. They also learned to appreciate their new principal and the changes he had brought to the school.

Berry Hill's Principal

Louis Wilkens, Berry Hill's new principal, was not new to school-level administration. During the seven years prior to his arrival at Berry Hill, he had acted as principal for two schools simultaneously. Before that, he had served as an assistant principal for three years and a classroom teacher for five. With his infectious broad smile, he recounted for us his experiences before he entered the teaching profession. He graduated from a Jesuit college in 1958 with a major in philosophy and subsequently decided to enter the Air Force, where he worked for five years as a missile launch officer. He then married a teacher who encouraged him to begin a career in education (TI, 9/7/82, p. 5).

Wilkens's attire always included a tie and very shiny shoes (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21). One might have surmised that the spit-polished shine on his shoes was a lingering military habit, but in fact, it was a consequence of Wilkens's relationship with his first principal. Early on, that school leader had recognized Wilkens's administrative potential and had, consequently, begun to prepare Wilkens informally for the principalship. During that time, Wilkens's mentor had admonished him to "polish your shoes every day" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 2). Wilkens had taken the admonition to heart, but laughingly admitted that he now "cheat[ed] and use[d] liquid polish" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 12).

Tall, Black, and 43 years old, Wilkens radiated confidence and serenity as he walked across the play yards or marched down the hallways. He was always ready to help his teachers and students (TI, 2/26/83, p. 11; TI, 4/14/83, p. 4). A hug and gentle teasing most often greeted the teacher who approached Wilkens burdened with a problem (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19). The principal's warm and humorous interjections into more serious matters acted to dissipate tension and communicated to the teacher that nothing was going to surprise him. Wilkens used humor to discourage apologies or explanations from teachers. His unspoken message was "I trust you. Let's just arrange a resolution" (FN, 10/6/82, p. 9).

It appeared that Wilkens's teachers believed him when he said that "anything is negotiable," and they knew that his presence represented support for their reasonable actions even when these actions had unexpected consequences (FN, 9/8/82, p. 4). As a result, the staff felt free to approach Wilkens with requests and problems. Some teachers reported that the principal's ability to help them and his unflagging respect for them created an atmosphere that encouraged experimentation with new projects and instructional units (TI, 2/26/83, p. 11; TI, 3/10/83, pp. 9-11). They were secure in the knowledge that they would not be condemned for failure.

Wilkens was equally open to the problems and concerns of students, sharing the same warmth and humor he extended to teachers. Through jokes, he attempted to diminish their crises, and his patience in dealing with them conveyed to them that he took their issues seriously (TI, 5/16/83, p. 2; TI, 6/2/83, p. 9). Even children sent to him for discipline were greeted with respect. Most often these short conferences began with conversations about unrelated matters, which helped students relax and become less defensive. If reprimands followed, they were short and did not rob children of their sense of worth. Wilkens left students with the knowledge that better behavior was expected, and that this expectation must be met (FN, 9/13/82, pp. 19-21; FN, 5/19/83, p. 7; FN, 6/2/83, p. 3).

The principal described himself as an "extroverted introvert" (TI, 9/8/82, p. 16). In explanation he said that, despite his open, friendly manner about the school, he remained a private person, a "family man" who easily retreated from the tensions of the school into his role as husband and father (FN, 9/8/82, p. 17). For Wilkens, "family" represented security and mutual trust and a place for sharing and growing. This refuge allowed him to feel somewhat detached from the hectic world of the school principal. In some respects he viewed the job as a game in which he was required to develop strategies to overcome the blockades that occasionally appeared. Thus, he was able to treat his job with some degree of equanimity, saying that "school is serious enough already" (TI, 9/8/82, p. 5).

But the importance he accorded to the idea of "family" affected Wilkens's day-to-day behavior at Berry Hill; to him, the school was an extended family. In assemblies he told students, "We are all family. We don't have to like each other, but we have to respect each other" (FN, 9/21/82, p. 1). He often added, "If we don't have [each other], we have no one" (FN, 9/21/82, p.

1). He echoed the same sentiment to his faculty. At a staff meeting in the beginning of the year, Wilkens insisted that staff members show respect to each other whether they liked one another or not (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13).

But the principal's commitment to these values was most visible in his efforts to model the behaviors he expected from staff and students. He discouraged disparaging talk about anyone, including the former principal (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13); he covered for his teachers when they had to attend to personal business (TI, 5/19/83, p. 5); he helped with mundane office work (FN, 9/21/82, p. 10); he regularly took his turn at yard supervision (FN, 9/13/82, p. 18); and he personally supervised the lunch room each day unless an emergency called him away (FN, 9/8/82, p. 1). When he said, "We're all in this together," his actions demonstrated that he meant it (FN, 9/21/82, p. 1). Students and teachers saw that Wilkens's actions were consistent with his beliefs, and they knew that they could count on that consistency.

A Day in the Life of Louis Wilkens

Principal Louis Wilkens had developed a style of management that, in his opinion, brought to life his vision of what a school should be within the context of Berry Hill Elementary School and its community. Some of the salient features of that context were: a relatively affluent, primarily White student population; active, sometimes divisive, groups of parents; students achieving at lower than expected levels; a 10% student transiency rate created by parents transferring students within the district; and an experienced teaching staff. This section presents a typical day for Wilkens at Berry Hill as seen through the eyes of an observer who attempted to record only those incidents directly involving the principal. The "day" as it appears here is in reality a composite, made up of segments drawn from several different days. The incidents, however, are representative and create a vivid and accurate impression of life at Berry Hill. This close-up view describes Wilkens's interactions with students, staff, and parents, and it also illustrates how political, demographic, and financial factors influenced the actions of Berry Hill's principal.

In the main office of Berry Hill Elementary School, Principal Louis Wilkens leaned casually against a metal file cabinet, greeting teachers as they arrived for work. Dressed in a light blue suit, dark tie, blue crepe de chine shirt with an embossed design, and as always, shiny black shoes, Wilkens conveyed an air of professionalism. Yet, it was his calm and easygoing manner that teachers and students had come to appreciate. As the principal exchanged comments with staff members, Janice Bloom, a kindergarten teacher, entered the office, dressed in what might be mistaken for a karate outfit. Wilkens saw her and joked, "Looks like you forgot to get dressed this morning, Janice." This teacher had a reputation for wearing unusual and often exotic clothes, and while she checked her mailbox, Wilkens kidded her about coming to school in "pajamas." Responding to the principal's banter with a smile, Janice then asked him if she might leave the campus during lunch. When she tried to give him her reason, however, Wilkens cut her short and said teasingly, "I don't want to hear all about it, just do it," and with a playful glance at her clothes, added, "Are you sure you're not going somewhere else?" She attempted to apologize for any inconvenience, but Wilkens brushed aside her apologies. Giving up the attempt, she retreated to her classroom with a thank you and a smile.

Just before the clock reached the hour of nine, Wilkens walked to the auditorium where microphones were being set up for an assembly. Every morning, Monday through Thursday, the principal presided over two assemblies--one for the upper and one for the lower grades. Then on Friday, he greeted all of Berry Hill's students at a schoolwide assembly. When Wilkens had initiated these daily meetings, he had envisioned them primarily as a way of bringing the school together to start the day off right. Since the beginning of the year, however, the assemblies had become a forum for student birthday observances and for entertainment provided by students and teachers. Wilkens himself used the opportunity not only to make general announcements but to define school policy and answer students' questions.

As students, organized by grades, filed into the auditorium, Wilkens stood on stage, making small talk with the children seated toward the front. "You look nice," he said to one girl. Then, upon seeing a rather solemn-looking student, he said, "Let's start the day with a smile."

Once everyone was seated, the principal called out a good morning and introduced two student traffic patrol members to lead the pledge of allegiance. When the echo of children's voices had died away, a primary-circuit teacher, Sandra Burke, came forward to direct the audience in yoga-like exercises. The principal and the custodian joined in rolling their necks and stretching to "reach for the stars."

Wilkens then asked if anyone had prepared entertainment. In response, two sixth-grade girls, one carrying a flute, clambered upon the stage. While the girls set up a shiny metal music stand, Wilkens helped the custodian move the piano to center stage. When all was ready, the girls performed a flute and piano duet of the theme to the movie "Star Wars," making only a few stumbles along the way.

After congratulating the girls, Wilkens asked for a show of hands from the students who took music lessons. At least half of the children raised their hands. The principal remarked that he understood the many hours of practice required to play well, adding, "We appreciate what our students do, we don't criticize." He often made similar comments in order to promote his belief that everyone should treat each other respectfully.

Wilkens then read part of a letter from Mr. Goldstone of the Highland Businessmen's Association, asking whether students at Berry Hill wanted to participate in the annual Halloween window painting. The principal said that interested students should drop a note in his paper tray. The tray he referred to was a bright orange basket, which sat on the counter in the main office. On a regular basis, Wilkens encouraged students to write him notes and drop off school projects, compositions, or anything they wanted to share with him. Each student received a response. If there was enough interest in the Halloween project, Wilkens continued, the students could form a committee that would decide how much paint would be needed and figure out other details.

The principal then asked the students if they knew what important event was scheduled for October 1st. Students shouted out several guesses--"Holiday?" "Field trip?" "Picture day?" Wilkens answered that October 1st was the "picture day of brain power--report card day."

At 9:20, Wilkens concluded the assembly by commenting, "We have to be considerate of others." Then students began filing out of the auditorium. The principal, who was customarily the last to leave, lingered in the lobby, chatting with students and teachers. As the children passed by, Wilkens teased some and complimented others on new haircuts, clothes, achievements, or improvements in academic or social behavior.

It was 9:30 when Wilkens returned to his office and began going through his mail. Unlike those of many of his colleagues, Wilkens's office looked almost empty. Except for a white plastic pencil holder, his desk was free of paper and other clutter. He kept his telephone in a drawer and placed the intercom telephone on the floor next to his desk. Wilkens's office housekeeping habits gave his desk an unoccupied look. The principal took care of all paperwork each day. Letters and memoranda were handled before the day's end, or if they came in late in the day, they were attached to a clipboard and recorded on a to-do list. Notes were either filed or thrown out. And at the end of the day, the clipboard, too, was hidden away in a desk drawer.

Facing the desk was a bookshelf that contained several binders on district policy and some literature for pleasure reading. A painting entitled, "Running Free," depicting wild horses galloping across a scrub landscape, hung above the bookshelf. According to Wilkens, the picture was there because "someone told me I should have a picture in my office--make it look more like home." A hooked tapestry above the door to the outer office also added a personal touch to the office. The tapestry, which depicted several children, had been made and given to him by a class of autistic students from one of his earlier schools. Photographs of his wife and children and of himself in high school and college decorated another wall. Also displayed was a decoupage plaque with the motto, "The best thing a father can do for his children is love their mother."

The principal's door was rarely closed, and from his desk, Wilkens had a direct view of the counter in the main office. When Milly Lewis, the secretary, was busy, he often helped out by answering the phone and manning the counter. Today she called out to Wilkens that the departmentalization cards were ready for the teachers. Taking advantage of the opportunity to tour the halls and classrooms, Wilkens offered to distribute the cards himself. As he walked down the hallway, a diminutive parent who was volunteering as a classroom aide said hello. Wilkens responded, "You look like one of my sixth graders."

The first room the principal entered was a third-grade class taught by Deborah Anderson, who had been dubbed, unbeknown to her, superstar. Although often difficult to get along with, she had the well-earned reputation of being an extremely competent and well-organized teacher. Parents frequently requested that their children be assigned to her class.

When Wilkens entered the classroom, he found Deborah's students interviewing each other with a tape recorder. After a few students had been recorded, the teacher played back the tape so they could listen to themselves. When the children began to show signs of restlessness, the teacher switched to explaining the "Kid of the Week" bulletin board. The children were given pieces of paper and told to write down their names and one thing that made them special. Each Monday, a name would be picked, and during that week, everyone else in the class would write a letter to that person. The letters would be numbered in the order they were received and the student who had turned in his letter first would be the first person dismissed. The kid of the week would also have special treats during the week, and Deborah solicited from the children their suggestions for these treats. A vote was taken, and the students chose planning a lesson.

The principal, pleased with what he saw in Deborah's class, departed and continued his rounds to the other classrooms. After distributing the last packet of cards, Wilkens proceeded to the faculty lounge for an 11 o'clock meeting. The main topic of discussion was the selection of a photography studio to take the school pictures. As was typical of Wilkens's governing style, he had delegated authority for this matter to the student council. The students themselves had arranged to view samples and to meet with representatives from five different studios. Later, Wilkens told his faculty that the students had impressed him. He admitted that he himself had underestimated the seriousness with which the students assumed their responsibility.

The meeting ended shortly before noon, and Wilkens donned his sunglasses and headed out to the lunchroom and playground for yard duty. At the first faculty meeting of the school year, Wilkens had volunteered to do yard supervision during the lunch hour. It gave him a time to observe all the children and a chance to talk with them informally. Wilkens first approached a group of girls and inquired, "Where are my birthday girls?" The birthday girls weren't present, so he asked the group to tell the girls to see him before lunch was over. Turning away, Wilkens spotted a third-grade boy walking around with a can of soda and demanded, "What are you doing with beer?" The boy stiffened with surprise. Wilkens teased, "I've seen those phony cans." The boy then smiled and relaxed. A moment later, another child approached Wilkens with a bag of potato chips and asked for the principal's help in opening it. "Do I get to eat it if I open it?" Wilkens asked.

A girl then walked slowly toward the principal. She was in tears. Wilkens put his arm around her and asked what the trouble was. Apparently, she was newly enrolled and had no friends. Wilkens asked what grade she was in. Then he surveyed the playground, chose a group of girls, and asked if any one of them was in the first grade. When one girl responded yes, he asked if she would play with the new girl. She nodded her head.

Wilkens noticed some trash on the playground. As he began picking up the garbage and putting it in the wastecan, he asked the students standing nearby to help clean up. While they cleaned the yard, another student reported that a boy was saying bad words. After asking that the offender be pointed out, Wilkens called the boy over. A group of boys quietly approached the principal; Wilkens singled out a boy named Jason, whose clothes were soiled, and sent the others away with "Bye, guys." Wilkens asked Jason why he had been rolling around in his nice clothes and getting them dirty. Jason said that his mother didn't care. Wilkens replied, "But I care." Then, just before releasing him, the principal said, "And watch your language."

It was toward the end of the lunch hour when two giggling girls shyly approached the principal. They were the birthday girls and agreed to accompany Wilkens back to his office where the principal presented them with bookmarks on which he had written "Happy Birthday" and his signature.

At 1:05, Wilkens strolled over to the teachers' lounge. Wendy Jones, a first-grade teacher, was eating her lunch. She thanked Wilkens for allowing her to rearrange her schedule so that she could observe a reading program at another school. It had been eight years since Wendy had taught first grade, and she felt insecure about teaching reading. She had returned from the observation reassured and confident. She showed Wilkens some handouts that she was developing for parents to help their children learn to read.

It was half past the hour when Wilkens, Darlene Swanson, the SIP coordinator, and Milly, the secretary, got together for their organizational meeting. The weekly administrative meeting was a new activity at the school, an idea that Wilkens had picked up in a management course and decided to try at Berry Hill. The tone of these meetings was usually relaxed and informal, more that of a conversation than formal discussion.

The group discussed a variety of topics before Darlene asked Wilkens what should be done with the money left over from a previous class trip. Wilkens's proposal that the sixth graders visit the state capitol prompted discussion of future class trips. The principal's method of participation was to make suggestions, provide brochures or other materials, and then to wait for people's reactions.

Wilkens took charge of planning an in-house letter that was to be distributed to the teachers later that day. Besides containing an agenda for the next faculty meeting, the letter reminded teachers that aides were employed only from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and that they were not to be given work to take home. The letter also announced that Mrs. Knopf, a parent, would speak to the faculty next Tuesday at 12:30 about the upcoming computer conference. Mrs. Knopf had played a leading role in the school computer program, particularly in organizing parental support. The program's three-year aim was to improve teachers' skills in using the computer for class instruction and record keeping. The letter asked teachers what type of instruction interested them.

Darlene, the SIP coordinator, reported that she had not received test booklets and wanted to know whether the district book department had received their order. Wilkens referred to the list of important telephone numbers taped to the pullout shelf on his desk and called the book office. When he learned he was speaking to the secretary, whose name was Lucy, he added her name and number to the list. The principal briefly explained the situation to her and was told the orders would be looked up and checked. A few minutes later, Lucy called back. Wilkens joked, "We have to stop meeting like this," and then thanked her for immediately following up on the matter. The meeting drifted to a conclusion at 2:15 as the conversation shifted gears toward casual small talk about family and sports.

At 2:30, Milly, Wilkens's secretary, received a phone call from a parent who was confused about the possible retention of her child. Wilkens went into his office to take the call. The mother thought that her daughter, who was supposed to be in the sixth grade, was going to be retained in the fifth grade. Wilkens explained that the girl was in a combination fifth/sixth grade and that all children were going to be tested for placement under the new departmentalization plan. He assured the parent that he would call her later and let her know if there were any problems.

After the principal hung up, he looked up the phone numbers of three other children who were in the same position. Anticipating a potential problem with other parents, he sought to clarify any confusion which they, too, might be feeling. He called the second family and asked the parent, "[Do you] know that there was talk of retaining Rebecca this year?" He went on to explain that some of the other parents in similar situations had been unaware or confused. Although these parents were aware of the possible retention, the principal briefly described the departmentalization move and said he would talk with the students in question.

After phoning the third family and having a similar conversation with the mother, Wilkens had Milly page the students involved in the retention and request that they come to his office.

Five minutes later, at three o'clock, two boys and a girl came into the principal's office. Wilkens said he guessed that they were wondering about their status since they were in a combined fifth/sixth grade. "We are watching you to see how you do," he said as he surveyed their test scores from last year. "Do you want it honestly?" he asked, referring to their previous performance. They did. He explained their scores and the fact that he was particularly concerned about reading. If they needed any special help, they were to let him know. He then asked one of the students to get him a piece of paper to write notes to their teachers and sent them back to class.

When school ended at 3:10, Wilkens was seated at his desk, writing his lesson plan for tomorrow's assembly. As he began to jot down some notes, the phone rang. On the other end was a principal from another school district. The two discussed the upcoming meeting of Associates for School Improvement, the principal support group to which they belonged.

Then at 3:20, Gary Morris, an upper-circuit teacher, came in to talk about a student who had been in a special education class at his old school. In Gary's judgment, the student did not belong in a special education pullout program. Wilkens replied that he would do what he could, although the child would remain in the program for the time being. He asked Gary to monitor the student's performance closely.

After Gary had left, another teacher, Harold McCauley, dropped by. Harold had taught at one of the schools where Wilkens had been a principal previously. Harold told Wilkens how his students were doing in math. For a few minutes he and Wilkens compared Berry Hill and their old school; then Harold said, "Goodbye," and left.

Wilkens then returned to writing his lesson plan. When he had completed that task, the office clock read 4:10. Wilkens rose, turned his calendar to the next page, put his clipboard in his desk drawer, and headed for home.

Summary

Berry Hill, a small elementary school nestled in the hills of an industrial city, was distinguished from other schools in this urban district by more than its wooded setting. Its parents were a wealthier, more professional group than those of most of the district's other public schools; their expectations for their children were higher; and they were more active in the school and district than parents at other schools.

This school, however, had its own set of problems. Students had failed to achieve at levels consistent with their potential or with their teachers' and parents' expectations. Conflicts between parents and teachers had been common. The faculty had been divided, and relationships between the staff and the previous principal had been poor. The district administration perceived Berry Hill as a problem school with vociferous "troublemakers."

Louis Wilkens, an experienced principal, came to Berry Hill facing the task of building a harmonious organization in which students would achieve in a manner more in keeping with their potential. During his first year, he demonstrated a calm, friendly approach to leadership that began to gain the trust and respect of students, staff, and parents.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM OF THE SCHOOL

In the previous section, we introduced the reader to the school's setting, staff, and clients. We also attempted to bring our descriptions to life by allowing the reader to walk the halls with the principal, observing events as he or she experienced them. In this second portion of our study, we describe the elements of the school's instructional system, and we recount the manner in which the principal's activities influenced, or failed to influence, each aspect. Again, our purpose is to reveal the role of the principal in the complex task of managing instruction at the building level.

The array of elements that we describe as parts of the instructional system may surprise some readers, for we envision the instructional process as involving much more than didactic interactions between teacher and student. The technical and social aspects of instruction are created, to a great extent, by teachers and students in classrooms, but instructional processes are affected directly and indirectly by social and organizational features of the school itself. The school, in turn, is affected by its larger context. For example, opportunities and constraints for participants in schools derive from state and federal regulations, districtwide programs and policies, as well as from circumstances imposed by the communities within which schools reside. In addition, each participant in the schooling process brings to a building or classroom his or her own history of experiences and his or her beliefs. These personal and idiosyncratic elements of school organizations also greatly influence the nature of instruction and student experience (Dwyer, 1984). In the first section of this study, we illustrated how these factors interweave to form the context in which we view principals' behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors.

But to describe completely--or even satisfactorily--the complex blend of individuals and contexts that make up a school, we must, in some rational fashion, untangle policies, programs, individual proclivities, services, operating procedures, and even building designs. In order to accomplish this analysis, we must make distinctions, slicing organizational wholes into arbitrary and discrete pieces. The problem with any such dissection, however, is the artificial creation of categories. In the day-to-day events in the schools of our studies, no such distinctions occur; boundaries blur through multitudes of interactions and interactional effects. Nor can our "surgery" be guided by previous work. Prior research has failed to set forth a single, generalizable model of schools--the successes of the extant models are hinged to the specific purposes of the authors' analyses (e.g., Charters & Jones, 1973; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Gowin, 1981; Metz, 1978; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968).

Our strategy in facing this problem is twofold. First, whenever possible, we have allowed our incisions to be guided by the practical sense of the principals and teachers with whom we worked, using those categories mentioned frequently by them or used by them in planning. Secondly, in order to illustrate the permeability of our categories, we have taken every opportunity to describe how the different parts of our model affect one another. The unavoidable consequence of this latter tactic is some redundancy. We hope the reader will be understanding and patient.

This section, then, begins with a description of the overall goals of the school and proceeds to an examination of the social or climatic factors supporting or interfering with realization of those goals. It also describes the technical or organizational aspects of instruction at the school that either harmonize or clash with those goals.

Berry Hill's Social and Academic Goals

John Dewey (1916) asserted that as a society advances, the need for formalized education increases. Knowledge grows exponentially, its accruing bulk rapidly outpacing any single individual's capacity or opportunity to gather it all firsthand. Schools, in response, are appointed to pass on the experiences, achievements, and values of a society and to prepare individuals to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. As a result, children, through schooling, come to link the past to the future. Schools also serve a custodial purpose. Children constructively occupied as learners permit their parents the freedom to earn a living and secure a home. This multitude of purposes and responsibilities often finds expression through the social and academic goals that principals and teachers set for their students.

Setting specific and realistic goals was an important part of Wilkens's strategy for managing Berry Hill. The district office had designated him a turnaround principal when it assigned him to the school. As a reputed troubleshooter, Wilkens was expected to mend strained community and staff relations and to increase achievement test scores. In taking on the job, Wilkens felt that because he shared the "suburban mentality" of the Berry Hill community, he would be able to work successfully with the parents and students at the school (TI, 9/7/82, p. 19). For example, the relative affluence of Berry Hill's families meant that Wilkens did not have to deal with an issue that had bothered him regarding expectations for schools. He elaborated:

> I don't think the role of the schools is to make up for all the other problems of religion and health and dentistry. I don't think our role is to provide nutrition for kids. I think it's the parents' responsibility, so I have no problem with dropping school lunches. Whether we pray in school or don't pray in school, I could care less. . . . Sort of a little termite I have eating at my chair right now is the lay-ons that the school has been forced to accept. And we just can't spend our time making sure Johnny and Susie have a good breakfast and a good lunch at the sacrifice of good reading and good math. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 15)

Factors like student health and nutrition were not concerns at Berry Hill, giving the principal, who had previously worked in more impoverished areas of the district, the freedom to focus directly on those problems he had been selected to resolve.

Social Goals: Louis Wilkens believed that to be effective, a school must "produce a kid" who could "function in an institution, get along with other people, [and] respect others" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41). A successful student would "not necessarily like or go along with the rules, but [would] understand why you have rules" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41). In giving a definition of effectiveness which balanced an exercise of authority with a regard for students' personal needs, Wilkens revealed the various influences that helped shape his social goals for students. His experience as an Air Force officer and the advice of his mentor had led him to emphasize institutions and rules, prompting him at times to expound a very traditional view of schools. But his warm, low-key personality, his educational background in the liberal arts, and his participation in a number of professional development activities had given a more humanistic bent to Wilkens's notion of successful education. In particular, his membership in a support group for principals, Associates for School Improvement, had strengthened his belief that promoting students' respect for others and for themselves would lead students to achieve more and to derive more enjoyment from the learning process (Doc., n.d.).

Upon assuming the principalship at Berry Hill, a school with a history of staff morale problems, argumentative students, and strained relations with the community, Wilkens focused on improving school climate, in the belief that this was the best way to promote his social goals for students and create an environment conducive to learning. Convinced that his abilities in the area of human relations were his strongest asset, Wilkens concentrated on modeling the behaviors he wanted to instill in Berry Hill's students. Throughout the year, his interactions with students and staff illustrated the themes of showing respect for others and following rules. Moreover, he expected teachers to follow his lead: "Number one, teachers are role models," he declared (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21). He wanted teachers to demonstrate for students the same respectful, caring demeanor that he himself used.

Wilkens also viewed the school's curriculum as a possible avenue for promoting his social goals. The principal had brought with him to Berry Hill a colleague who taught a course called "Applied Life Sciences." Designed to teach goal setting and positive thinking, the course struck Wilkens as a method of improving student self-esteem and school climate (SO, 2/25/83, p. 2). As indicated by some of its slogans, however (e.g.,"the self-motivated man is one who has developed more of the God-given potential all of us possess!" [FN, 9/13/82, p. 13]), the course's motivational strategies were often quasi-religious in nature. And this aspect of Applied Life Sciences aroused the anger of some members of the Berry Hill community.

Although Wilkens made no secret of his initial support for the course, displaying one of the course's slogans on a placard in his office, his response to the objections of Berry Hill's parents was conciliatory. He scheduled a series of meetings with parents and teachers to attempt to work out a solution. And he also tried to solicit parent opinions on a number of other aspects of the school's curriculum. When these tactics failed to calm the winds of protest, Wilkens resolved the issue by cancelling the course, claiming that the controversy was damaging the positive climate he was attempting to foster (FN, 12/1/82, p. 7). He emerged from the storm, however, still unshaken in his opinion that morals and values were important to school curriculum and school climate (FN, 11/18/82, pp. 6-8).

Though many of Berry Hill's staff may have shared Wilkens's beliefs, few actually attributed their social goals to the principal. This may have been because the staff consisted almost entirely of veterans and because it was Wilkens's first year at the school. Yet at least one staff member not only acknowledged that the principal had communicated his primary goal of teaching respect to members of the school community, but also claimed that Wilkens had been successful in implementing his vision. Pointing to a student who had just entered a classroom, this teacher said:

> Now, see, like that--that kid just came in right now, takes off his hat--respectful, you know? These are the things that Louis as principal is also trying to teach children. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 16)

Another teacher's discussion of her social goals for students clearly echoed Wilkens's emphasis on institutional behavior and rules. She said:

> I want them [the students] to understand that school is work, too. Sometimes it can be fun, but I want to balance it for them. There's things that they just have to do. They need to learn a self-discipline and [that] a

> classroom's almost a microcosm of society and so you need to function somewhat within the rules and the regulations and some things you like and some things you won't like. But that's the way it is. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 2)

And though the statements of some staff members reflected the more humanistic aspect of Wilkens's philosophy, most of these staff members did not mention Wilkens as a major influence in shaping their beliefs. These teachers mentioned outcomes such as building students' self- and group esteem (TI, 2/26/83, p. 1; TI, 4/14/83, p. 1; TI, 4/28/83, p. 1; TI, 5/9/83, p. 1); socializing students (TI, 4/18/83, p. 2; TI, 4/20/83, p. 1); and enhancing an enjoyment of learning (TI, 2/26/83, p. 4; TI, 3/10/83, p. 1; TI, 4/14/83, p. 2).

Academic Goals: As stated earlier, Berry Hill students came from success-oriented families where parents closely monitored their children's academic achievements. The districtwide school achievement tests, administered each April, acted as a short-term gauge of that success. Although the test scores of Berry Hill's students were high for the district, they were considered low in relation to community and district office expectations. As incoming principal, Wilkens knew that a community and district goal was to improve these test scores. He said to our observer, "Testing is the most important thing--I've been told that enough by the associate superintendent" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 36). In compliance, at the first faculty meeting he urged teachers to "tighten up on spelling" where test scores were particularly low (FN, 9/13/82, p. 12). He told our observer that he anticipated classes would be in a "testing mode around February or March" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 18).

Though Wilkens's belief in getting along within institutional structures encouraged his support of district goals, he did not feel that elementary curriculum began and ended with standardized tests. He described in some detail his differences with district expections:

> [The] district, right now, is very much into test scores. And I have no problem with it. I have a concern if that's your only motive; where is education, you know? I don't stop at test scores, I believe you have to teach [for] a wide variety [of outcomes]. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 18)

For Wilkens, student competency on standardized tests was a minimal goal. To this end, he expressed his support, early in the school year, for a "meat and potatoes type of curriculum" (TI, 9/8/82, p. 14). Beyond that, however, he felt it important to begin working with "every kid . . . where he or she is at and take them as far as they can go" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 14). Thus, he was in favor of having a "wide variety" of offerings to get students to "stretch and reach" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41). And it was this latter view that grew more prominent as the school year progressed.

Perhaps because of his newcomer status at Berry Hill, Wilkens did not articulate instructional goals during his first semester at the school. A number of teachers expressed a belief that Wilkens was intentionally keeping a low profile while he observed and got his bearings in his new surroundings (TI, 2/25/83, p. 21; TI, 2/26/83, p. 12; TI, 5/9/83, p. 8). One inevitable result of Wilkens's noncommittal manner, however, was that several staff members said that they did not know what the principal's long-range goals were (TI, 2/26/83, p. 11; TI, 4/13/83, p. 7; TI, 4/28/83, p. 6).

As the year progressed, however, Wilkens began to make his presence felt in the instructional area at Berry Hill and to make plans for the coming year. In May, one teacher commented:

> By his [Wilkens's] own admission, he just came in and let things go the way they were, and now he's sat back and observed and he sees what doesn't work. I think he's got some very good plans for next year. (TI, 5/9/83, p. 8)

These included increased coordination and enrichment of the school's curriculum and a strengthened program for "Gifted and Talented" students.

Teachers' academic goals reflected those expressed by Wilkens. Like the principal, staff members regarded the district objectives as minimal for their students and were conscious of the community expectations for academic achievement. Therefore, they planned to meet the grade-level expectations by March, sprinting through the basics as quickly as possible. Then for the remainder of the school year, they hoped to provide enrichment activities.

The nature of these enrichment activities, which Wilkens actively encouraged, went far beyond the realm of standardized testing. In speaking of their goals, teachers used terms like "developing children's originality and creative thinking" (TI, 4/28/83, p. 1), and "teaching them the joy and usefulness of knowledge" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 1). And similar to the principal's "stretch and reach" comment, teachers also spoke of helping children to realize their full potential (TI, 4/13/83, p. 2; TI, 5/9/83, p. 1).

Summary: Louis Wilkens, Berry Hill's principal, entered his work with a mandate from the district to bring up students' test scores and to improve community and staff relations. He brought to the task a background that stressed, on the one hand, a respect for institutional structures and rules and, on the other, a concern for the needs and feelings of individuals. Thus, Wilkens accepted the district's charge to improve test scores, but he also looked beyond them to larger goals regarding student potential.

Despite his brief time at the school, Wilkens had had some success communicating his goals to staff and students. Teachers pointed to the more respectful demeanor of students as evidence of Wilkens's influence. Even when they did not mention Wilkens as a source of their viewpoints, staff members often expressed philosophies that were in accord with those of the principal. And some teachers felt that Wilkens, after observing for a time the instructional system at the school, had begun to shape the school's curriculum to further his academic goals for students.

The following sections describe how the principal and staff of Berry Hill Elementary School strove to implement their goals, working to create a productive instructional climate and instructional organization. In previous work, we identified climate and instructional organization as avenues along which principals could work to shape and improve their schools (Bossert et al., 1982). During our collaborative field work with principals, we continued to find these two concepts helpful in organizing the multitude of events, processes, and structures that we encountered in schools. Our definitions, however, changed to accommodate our expanding experiences. Again, the importance of these two concepts to our study of the instructional management role of principals is that they illuminate many of the strategies employed by our principals to accomplish the goals they established for their schools.

Berry Hill's Instructional Climate

In our study, we treat school climate (a notion embraced by all of our participating principals) as an observable and changeable characteristic of schools. For our principals, climate encompassed both physical and social elements. Changing a school's climate could mean anything from painting walls to organizing the way students lined up at recess. The comprehensiveness of the concept can be grasped from one principal's comment: "School climate starts at the curb." In general, our principals perceived climate as a diverse set of properties that would communicate to students that schools are pleasant but serious work places designed to help students achieve. In the following account of Berry Hill's instructional climate we will describe: a) the physical aspects of the school plant that promote or hinder the accomplishment of social and academic goals at the school; b) the social curriculum--activities designed to promote positive relationships within the school, student self-esteem, and productive attitudes towards learning; c) the school's discipline program; and d) the nature of the interrelationships among all members of the Berry Hill learning community.

Physical Components: Although Berry Hill's wooded setting and four-tiered layout were unusual, especially for this urban district, the school's physical plant was typical of most elementary schools. One large, L-shaped and two smaller play yards, with lines for student games painted on the asphalt, provided ample space for the school's students to play during recess. Yellow-dotted lines separated the large playground into areas for lower- and upper-grade students; older children had access to one of the younger children's playground structures two days each week (FN, 9/7/82, pp. 1-2, 9).

Tucked into the hillside above the play yards, the main building consisted of administrative offices and self-contained classrooms connected by a long, dim central hallway with a gray tile floor. Principal Wilkens's comment to our observer on a building tour reflected the lack of outstanding positive or negative features about the plant: "Classes are typical. Furniture isn't exciting. Rooms are a pretty good size" (SO, 9/7/82, p. 5).

Some efforts had been made to brighten the dark, drab interior of the main building: Parents had painted colored circles around classroom and office doors, and teachers had placed posters and student work on bulletin boards to decorate the halls. Wilkens himself had paid scant attention to decorating his barren office, preferring to spend his time walking the halls and grounds (SO, 9/7/82, p. 9). He had, however, added a note of brightness to the main office by placing in the room a bright orange basket which invited both comment and touch; this basket was a place where teachers and students could leave items for his comments (SO, 9/7/82, p. 5).

Although Wilkens was not overly concerned with the school's decor, he recognized that one of his first tasks as new principal at Berry Hill was to take charge of the school's physical space. He said:

> What I've noticed with most people [is that] everybody needs turf. . . . I feel that that is everybody's number one priority to start out with, and so that's the first thing I do, and that's an important instructional function of the principal. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 32)

In keeping with this belief, he made sure that a new aide had an office at the beginning of the year: "It's filled with P.E. equipment, but she knows she has a place," he said (TI, 9/7/82, p. 32). And at the year's first faculty meeting, Wilkens announced that to create extra space he and the custodian would go through storage areas in October and clear them out. He asked teachers to identify or remove materials that belonged to them (FN, 9/8/82, p. 14).

Similarly, Wilkens was concerned that students had enough space for themselves and their possessions. On the first day of school, the principal asked a child whether there was a safe place to leave lunch pails at the beginning of the day. The child shook his head. Immediately, Wilkens asked a teacher to set one up, and the next day there were two places for students to leave lunch pails (FN, 9/13/82, p. 21).

In Wilkens's eyes, the task of procuring and allocating the school's various material resources was almost as important as that of allocating physical space. The principal explained:

> At the start of the year, I think the important thing is just the physical mechanic[s] of making sure everybody has the physical things they need. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 32)

Consequently, when classes began, Wilkens spoke several times to the district office to obtain books and testing materials that had failed to arrive (FN, 9/13/82, pp. 16-17). He also wrote a letter to the former principal asking for more information about equipment that needed to be located (FN, 10/6/82, p. 7). Upon finding out that most components of an elaborate "Dictionopolis" game had vanished, he discussed with teachers the possibility of replacing the set (FN, 9/8/82, p. 5; FN, 9/21/82, p. 7; FN, 1/19/83, p. 7). He announced to teachers at the first faculty meeting that a copy machine had been ordered for the school (FN, 9/8/82, p. 5). And at a weekly meeting with teachers, he mentioned that students needed more P.E. equipment and a convenient storage place for it (FN, 9/21/82, p. 4).

Wilkens also played a leading role in making the school environment safe for students. He attended to fire drill preparations (FN, 10/6/82, p. 3) and discussed earthquake preparedness at a faculty meeting (FN, 9/8/82, p. 14). At an assembly, he warned students to use the crosswalk in front of the school, reminding them that recently a student from another school had been hit and killed (FN, 9/13/82, p. 4). He also responded to a parent's complaint that the location of a school bus stop obstructed motorists' view of cross traffic. Wilkens explained to her that he would not ask the bus driver to park across the street because children would then have to cross the street to board the bus (FN, 4/22/83, pp. 5-6).

Significantly, the principal's involvement with the maintenance of the school plant also provided him the opportunity to include other members of the Berry Hill community in school-related activities. He worked with parents and teachers to determine how to spend nondistrict funds to enrich the school. As part of a series of in-service meetings about the language arts program, Wilkens told teachers that an $8,000 corporate donation could be spent as they chose, and he had teachers make up a "wish list" of ideas for materials (FN, 1/19/83, pp. 6-7). He also had a parent group buy a Polaroid camera that could take black and white pictures suitable for newspaper reproduction. Later that year, the camera was used to photograph the winner of the school's spelling bee; the picture was then published in a local newspaper (FN, 3/22/83, p. 6).

Students, too, were made to feel that they had a role in routine maintenance of the school grounds. At the first assembly of the school year, Wilkens told students how hard the custodian had been working to get the school ready for everyone. He then asked the custodian to stand up for the students' applause (FN, 9/13/82, p. 3). Following this gesture, the principal asked students to help the custodian by picking up litter themselves. And to drive the lesson home, Wilkens set an example during lunchtime and yard supervision by picking up any trash he found in those areas (FN, 9/8/82, p. 17; FN, 9/13/82, p. 7; FN, 10/28/82, p. 6). One student credited the principal's presence in the cafeteria with stopping food fights that had sometimes taken place during the previous year (FN, 10/28/82, p. 4).

From these examples, we can see that the principal's concern with the physical aspects of Berry Hill Elementary School did not focus on radically altering the school's appearance. Rather, Wilkens sought to make sure that staff and students had sufficient space, that the necessary materials were provided for students, and that students were kept as safe as possible. The principal also attempted to involve other members of the Berry Hill community in helping to maintain the school's building and grounds.

Social Curriculum: Just as a neat and clean environment, filled with interesting and colorful materials, can encourage children to get involved in school and think more positively about it, the very words, mannerisms, actions, and activities of staff members may communicate to students a staff's level of commitment to, and concern about, children. These cues, conscious or not, may influence students' perceptions of their own efficacy and of their "belongingness" within their school and classroom communities (Brookover et al., 1973; Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1981; Getzels & Thelen, 1960). These aspects of school climate make up the social curriculum of a school. Most of our participants believed that this curriculum was important in attaining the school's social and academic goals.

Teachers and principals often think about social curricula in terms of discipline programs or extracurricular and structured activities in which children assume responsibility and exercise some authority. Student councils, student hall monitors, or student crossing guards are examples of activities that might be included under the social curriculum. In addition, teachers may allot classroom time for children to share personal problems or individual successes with their peers. Teachers might also use classroom activities to promote social goals for children. This section explores several aspects of Berry Hill's social curriculum and discusses how each supports or hinders the school's social and academic goals. Berry Hill's discipline program, however, will be addressed in a subsequent section.

Associates for School Improvement, the principal support group to which Wilkens belonged, greatly influenced the philosophy that he brought to Berry Hill. The support group stressed that academic and social curricula were interdependent, a belief that shaped Wilkens's priorities for improving school climate during the first year. For example, although raising the test scores of Berry Hill's well-to-do students was high on the list of district priorities, Wilkens did not initially address a major effort to changing the school's academic curriculum. Instead, he focused on school morale, making a conscious effort to model the desired behaviors for both students and teachers. Even the principal's dress was calculated to convey a message to students and staff about the seriousness of the business of education. In Wilkens's view, these tactics would have an academic payoff. As he said, "Curriculum is a total thing, and you can't divorce climate" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41).

As noted in the discussion of social and academic goals, Wilkens's principal support group emphasized that promoting respect for others and self was the basis for increasing academic achievement. One specific strategy that the group had suggested was using school assemblies to communicate goals and attitudes. As we have seen, Wilkens took this strategy to heart in coming to Berry Hill. Monday through Thursday mornings he presided over two assemblies--one for the upper and one for the lower grades--and on Friday he gathered together the entire student body to hear announcements and watch student performances. Wilkens was definite about the purpose of these gatherings. He explained:

> [Assemblies have] to do with setting a tone and getting the kid to feel positive about school and to forget about the outside world and to adjust to the inside world. Some kids come to school and actually loaf--this is to hype 'em up. Some kids come actually hyped--this is to lower 'em down. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 40)

When Wilkens mentioned "the inside world," he was referring to the institutional world. He believed that schools should teach students how to function in an institution and how to follow its rules. While the student entertainment at these functions taught students that school could be a fun place, the principal seized these opportunities to sermonize about rules on getting along within an institution. "We appreciate what our students do. We don't criticize" (FN, 9/28/82, p. 8); "We're all family here, we're one group" (FN, 9/21/82, p. 1); and "We have to be considerate of others" (FN, 9/28/82, p. 8) were some of the maxims that the principal recited to students during assemblies.

But Wilkens's efforts in this vein did not stop at making pronouncements. The key to successfully teaching students these principles, he said, was "saying what you mean and being consistent about it" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 22). During the year, we saw many instances where Wilkens consciously modeled the behavior he hoped teachers and students would notice and adopt. For example, each time he told students to clean up in the lunchroom or on the yard, he picked up some of the garbage himself (SO, 10/28/82, p. 6).

And in his daily interactions with students, Wilkens demonstrated to them the relationship between proper conduct and being considerate of others. To illustrate, he related the following occurrence at his former school:

> [The teachers] were always concerned about kids knowing your first name. I have a first name. I have no problem with it. Kids would come up and say, "How ya doin' today, Louis?" I'd say, "Fine, Mr. Jones," then wait for the reaction. The normal reaction is a change in the face and I'd say, "Are you comfortable being called Mr. Jones?" And they'd normally say, "Well . . ." "Or would you like for me to call you Jimmy?" They normally say, "Well, Jimmy." And I say, "Well, you know, Mr. Wilkens is more comfortable to me." (TI, 9/7/82, p. 22)

Berry Hill's students, too, seemed to be getting the message. When asked what she had learned from the principal, one student commented, "He doesn't teach us basics, you know, like math and stuff like that, but he teaches us how to be civilized kids and act mature" (TI, 5/16/83, p. 8).

Wilkens also illustrated "civilization" and "maturity" through his dress. He always wore a tie with either a suit or sports jacket. While he said, "I could [be] just as successful in puka shells and a V-neck or a polo shirt and white shoes" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21), he believed that clothes played an important role in setting tone in the school. Apparently, some teachers adopted Wilkens's implied dress code because the secretary commented that the staff's habits of dress had changed from last year when some teachers had come in their overalls (FN, 10/6/82, p. 9). Wilkens's mode of dress, however, did not imply inaccessibility. Rather than isolate himself in his office, the principal spent the majority of his time in the halls or supervising the school's grounds.

From the beginning of the school year, the principal's open and friendly manner made it clear that he wanted students to approach him during his supervision of the playground and the lunchroom. He explained:

> [The idea behind] going out in the yard and being with kids, . . . introducing yourself to kids, . . . smiling and forcing them to say, "Good morning," [is that] saying "Good morning" [sets] the whole tone. That is climate. It can be learned. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41)

And as he made his rounds, Wilkens purposefully sought out conversations with students and did not wait for them to come to him.

Staff members were quick to notice and capitalize upon the principal's openness. Teachers sometimes brought students who had successfully completed assignments to the principal's office for special acknowledgement. One staff member said that Wilkens was "very good about talking with the kids" (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13). And on a particular occasion, a teacher came to the office with a student whom Wilkens had previously reprimanded for using bad language. This time, however, the visit was not disciplinary. The teacher handed Wilkens a tape recorder, which the principal turned on. After a moment, the boy's voice, reading an assignment, issued from the speaker. As the principal listened, the teacher explained that the boy, with practice, had significantly improved in oral reading. Wilkens then praised the boy for his intonation and expression. The student, who had behaved shyly throughout the visit, grinned broadly before he and the teacher left the office. Later that day, Wilkens thanked the teacher for giving him a chance to have a positive interaction with the child (FN, 1/19/83, p. 3).

To Wilkens, teaching children respect also meant giving them responsibility. The principal took formal measures to encourage students to develop leadership skills. A typical aspect of his governing style was to delegate authority for certain tasks in order to enhance students' (and teachers') self-images. As seen earlier, Wilkens assigned to a group of students the job of deciding which photography studio should be hired to take the class pictures (FN, 2/16/83, p. 4). When, after a lengthy process, the final decision had been made, Wilkens summoned three members of the group to his office. Picking up the phone, he praised the students for making important decisions in a responsible manner (FN, 1/5/83, p. 4). He then dialed the number of the studio and, speaking to the studio representative, said that because the children had worked so hard, it was appropriate that they announce the decision. Then, ceremoniously, he handed the receiver to one of the students (FN, 1/19/83, p. 2).

Similarly, the principal assigned particular students to tasks designed to encourage feelings of self-worth. A student who had been in trouble frequently the previous year was asked to help the principal by unloading the papers from the paper recycling bin (TI, 6/2/83, pp. 2-3).

Teachers followed the principal's lead in encouraging students to develop social responsibility by assigning them extracurricular tasks. Certain children from the upper circuit were appointed to monitor the classrooms during lunch and recess when poor weather forced students to remain inside. These students also assisted with supervision on the playground on clear days. Students from the upper grades served as office monitors on a volunteer basis, answering phones and helping out during recess and lunch. Fifth and sixth graders could join the traffic patrol, which was administered by the principal. Finally, students from the upper circuit were elected to the student council following a month-long process of nominations, campaign speeches, and vote recruitment.

Within the classroom, teachers used a variety of means to instill social values in their students. Children tutored or read stories to their peers when teachers were called out of their classrooms (FN, 3/30/83, pp. 1-2). And teachers often assigned certain positions like "row captain" to students in their classes as a way of encouraging leadership skills (FN, 3/30/83, p. 4). As a regular activity, another teacher selected a "Kid of the Week." Each week, the selected student would receive a special treat. Interestingly, when the teacher asked the class to decide what that special treat should be, their choice was planning a lesson! (FN, 9/21/82, pp. 11-12).

Two staff members, with the support of Wilkens, had undertaken new projects designed, in part, to teach students social responsibility and socialization skills. The first had organized a puppet show where students read and selected plays to perform, constructed and costumed puppets, and designed and built props. The teacher led discussions about each play's content. After children had performed a play dealing with friendship, the teacher asked the class, "What did you learn?" Students replied, "You have to work to be a friend" and "You can't make friends in a hurry" (FN, 6/2/83, pp. 1-5). She also held feedback discussions after rehearsals to teach children about constructive criticism.

The second teacher was in charge of a Living with Nature project for her fourth and fifth graders. During the year, the children took an overnight boat trip, an experience that recreated what it was like to be part of a ship's crew during the 1930s. The extensive preparations preceding the actual trip included discussions about how much money would be needed, how best to raise it, and what food should be prepared (FN, 1/12/83, pp. 6-8)--discussions which required students to think through and make rational decisions.

The principal played a prominent role in the project. He took part in the training sessions for adult leaders, learning, for example, the proper way to tie knots (FN, 3/9/83, p. 9). He then assisted with the training of the students and went on the trip with the class. Importantly, Wilkens made sure his involvement was in keeping with the goals of the project. The teacher who organized the outing was full of praise for the principal. She said:

> [Wilkens] was a supportive person with the children. He didn't direct them. He let them make all the decisions. (TI, 3/9/83, p. 9)

The most significant, and certainly the most controversial, feature of Berry Hill's social curriculum was the offering of a course called Applied Life Sciences, which we have briefly touched on before. The class, labelled as a social science course in motivation and goal setting, was based on a cassette program produced by an out-of-state company. The course instructor, Harold McCauley, was new to Berry Hill but had worked under Wilkens previously. The principal had hired McCauley in part because he viewed the teacher's course as a way to improve student morale, self-esteem, and self-respect. According to the course's curriculum, students in the fourth through sixth grades received instruction in goal setting and values for two hours each week (FN, 11/18/82, p. 5). Applied Life Sciences stressed memorization of slogans about how to succeed, many of which mentioned God as a factor in success. McCauley had papered his classroom with poster boards displaying these slogans (FN, 9/13/82, p. 13). Although some parents praised the memorization aspects of the course, others complained about what they regarded as the overtly religious theme to the philosophical statements.

Initially, Wilkens supported the moral and ethical focus of Applied Life Sciences, claiming that the children were "already making moral decisions. They need the training early" (FN, 11/18/82, p. 6). But when the parent opposition to the course became acrimonious, the principal did not force the issue. Presiding over a number of meetings in which parents could air their grievances about the course, Wilkens used the debate as an opportunity to direct attention to the school's curriculum as a whole.

When these meetings failed to soothe the enflamed emotions of some parents, Wilkens decided to cancel the course because the controversy was "upsetting the children and getting in the way of education, which is what the school is about" (FN, 12/1/82, p. 4). In other words, a course whose purpose was to enhance the school's social curriculum was becoming an obstacle to achieving Wilkens's stated goal of teaching mutual respect. As one teacher said of the meetings:

> When you see another human being [McCauley] torn apart like that . . . [it's] a bad example for the children. (TI, 3/9/83, p. 3)

However, following the cancellation of the course, the issue of teaching values did not disappear. Still somewhat undaunted by the criticism he had received, McCauley continued to use materials with an ethical or moral bent, assigning, for example, readings from Aristotle's Ethics.

In sum, Wilkens's view of Berry Hill's social curriculum owed a great deal to his principal support group. Respect and values were to form a cornerstone for building student and staff self-esteem and for increasing student academic achievement. Through daily assemblies, in which he lectured students about proper behavior, and by supervising students in the cafeteria and the play yards, where he provided an example for them to emulate, Wilkens assumed a leading role in establishing the school's social curriculum. He also supported teachers' in-classroom efforts to teach responsibility and leadership and had hired a former colleague, who taught an Applied Life Sciences course dealing with values and goal setting. Although Wilkens was in favor of the course's focus on these issues, he moderated his support of the course when he felt that the controversy surrounding the class threatened the primary purpose of schooling.

Discipline: Although the administrators and teachers in our study included discipline as an important part of a school's social curriculum, the emphasis that they placed on the topic underlies our decision to give student discipline its own section in this report. In giving prominence to the question of discipline, the participants in our study were acting in accord with opinions expressed by scholars throughout the history of American education: For example, William T. Harris (1908) linked school discipline to the "moral education" of the country's children; Abraham Maslow (1954) theorized that children had to feel secure--the consequence of being in a safe environment--before they could devote energy and attention to higher order learning; and recently, and just as emphatically, researchers of effective schools have added their voices to the continuing concern about student deportment (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Wynne, 1981).

Berry Hill, unlike many schools in the district, but similar to its neighbors in the "hills," was known for its safe and orderly atmosphere. Although in the past, occasional food fights had erupted in the cafeteria, and children sometimes misbehaved on the playground, the school did not present its new principal with serious disciplinary problems. In the absence of any overwhelming disciplinary issues, the principal addressed himself during his first year at Berry Hill to having rules and regulations enforced consistently throughout the school. "Say what you mean, and mean what you say!" he admonished his teachers at the first staff meeting of the year (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13). Accordingly, he believed that rules should be direct and clear, and several times during the year, he mentioned the need to simplify, publicize, or revise disciplinary rules and procedures (TI, 9/7/82, p. 34; FN, 9/8/82, p. 12; FN, 9/13/82, p. 22).

During the first staff meeting, he also told his teachers that the existing list of rules governing student behavior was unnecessarily long. He preferred a short list of general rules such as "Show respect to adults" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 12). Later, as he planned one of his assemblies, he laid out five basic rules, which he intended to tell students: 1. Obey adults. 2. Keep hands, feet, and other objects to self. 3. Use common sense. 4. Complete all assigned tasks. 5. Stay in assigned areas (FN, 9/13/82, p. 22).

He was, however, reluctant to require that teachers adopt these rules, and he left staff members a great deal of latitude in establishing in-classroom disciplinary procedures. He required only that teachers make him and the students aware of their rules, preferably by posting them:

> I have to know the teachers' rules. I like to have the teachers put up their rules, their class rules. So the kids know. Then I know. Some teachers don't like kids to chew gum. I could care less whether kids chew gum or don't chew gum. So I don't want to go in a room and see a kid chewing gum and jump all over him, or not say something to him. So I would want to know what the school rules are and what their individual rules are and to make sure that goes throughout the whole instructional program. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 34)

Throughout the year, however, consistency in regard to discipline was to remain a problem. For example, Wilkens told his staff that when they sent students to his office, they should also send a note explaining what the offense was. He would then record what he had done and return the note to the teacher. Many teachers, however, did not seem to get Wilkens's message. In a meeting with his support group during March of that year, Wilkens told his fellow principals that students were still being sent to him without notes from their teachers. He continued:

> You know, you ask the kid what he did, and he says, "I don't know" or "The teacher said he'd meet me here." (FN, 3/22/83, p. 3)

Then with his typical humor, Wilkens said that he had once told his staff that if they sent him a child with a note written on his forehead, he'd write the answer in the same place before sending the child back to class. He was willing to respond, but he needed to know what the problem was. And the inability of Berry Hill's teachers to tell our fieldworker what actions the principal had taken when they referred students to him seemed to bear out Wilkens's complaint.

The teachers' lack of knowledge, however, may have also stemmed from the fact that Wilkens purposely created some mystery about what went on in his office. At a staff meeting, Wilkens related the following anecdote to illustrate his disciplinary methods:

> How do I handle kids? Doris can tell you from [my former school]. I do a lot of banging and noise in the office. I used a telephone book at one school, banged on the desk with it, the kids don't know where it's going to land. Remember the time I kicked on the door? This one kid took me on in the auditorium in

> front of the whole school. I took him outside, into the hall, and closed the door. I yelled a lot and kicked the door. I guess the kids in the auditorium thought I was killing the kid. Anyway, word got around, and the father came--on his motorcycle in a leather jacket, wanting to know what I did to his son. I brought the boy to my office and told the father what the boy had said in the auditorium. The father asked the boy what I did to him, and the boy says, "Gee, Dad, I wanted to get back into the auditorium and Mr. Wilkens was kicking the door, I couldn't get past him." Both the son and the father apologized before they left. (FN, 9/8/82, p. 9)

Wilkens concluded the story by saying that when a kid gets sent to the office, "everyone wants to know what happened" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 9). His tactic, however, was to make students feel that some unnamed dire consequence would ensue when rules were broken, so that when one of their peers was called in to see the principal, other students would be "glad they, [too,] aren't in [the office]" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 6).

But the secrecy was also a message to the teaching staff. Wilkens wanted teachers to know that once a student had been referred to him, he assumed full responsibility. In his view, a teacher should not try to tell a student beforehand what the principal was going to do. He elaborated:

> I wouldn't tell the kid what you're doing in your class. That's your business. It's mutual. What I do in my office is my business. We can say that I'm a structured authoritarian. When the kids see me, I will be fair and honest. (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13)

Wilkens may have seen his "structured authoritarianism" as perfectly suited to the attitudes of Berry Hill's students, whom he jokingly contrasted to students from his former schools:

> These kids are so verbal: You tell a kid to get in his seat, and he says, "Why?" If you try to answer it, you're into a twenty-minute discussion. (FN, 3/22/83, pp. 3-4).

The students were, indeed, somewhat irrepressible in their behavior. One boy, for example, in defiance of the school's closed-campus policy, regularly sneaked off campus during lunch to run on the trails behind the school. He viewed the principal's supervision of the play yards not as a deterrent but as an obstacle to be overcome. The boy forthrightly wished that Wilkens would not remain outside throughout the lunch period so it would be possible to leave the campus without sneaking away

(TI, 5/19/83, p. 15). This blatant disregard for school rules might have justified strong response on the part of the principal.

Yet, despite his stated propensity to bang phone books and kick doors, Wilkens usually interacted with students humanely rather than belligerently. During his lunchtime supervision of the playground and cafeteria, Wilkens leavened the punishment he meted out with humor and pleasant conversation, using disciplinary incidents to develop positive relationships with students. Doing so, he hoped, would deter students from misbehaving. For example, once while monitoring the hallways, Wilkens spotted two children coming inside before the bell had rung. "Where are you supposed to be?" he questioned them, directing them back out to the play yard. Before they left, however, he said to one of them, "You don't have to look like you're in trouble until next time," and to the other, "Smile, things aren't that bad" (FN, 9/13/82, p. 1).

Wilkens often sought to defuse a situation before confronting it directly. First, he talked with the child about something other than the immediate problem in order to show that the principal's interest in the child extended beyond the particular incident (SO, 9/13/82, p. 21). In an example mentioned earlier (see "A Day in the Life of Louis Wilkens," p. 14), Wilkens told a student who had been using bad language that he cared about the boy getting his nice clothes dirty. The principal's reprimand about the boy's language was appended as an afterthought (FN, 9/13/82, p. 20). The usual result of this tactic was that the child went away not only with a clear notion of what he or she had done wrong but also with a positive relationship with the principal. As one of the students with whom Wilkens had spoken told us:

> He [Wilkens] doesn't get mad. He just talks normally. He tells me to stay away [from another student] and sometimes when he tells me to do that, we talk, tell jokes and stuff at recess. (TI, 6/2/83, pp. 3-4)

Similarly, Wilkens's interactions with students in his office tended to be more friendly than threatening. On one occasion, a boy who had been sent to the principal for misbehaving on the playground was told first to "calm down" (FN, 4/22/83, pp. 6-7). Wilkens then went on to ask the boy how he had been getting along with the substitute teacher. Finally, he sent the boy back to class, insisting simply that there be "no more problems" (FN, 4/22/83, pp. 6-7). Another time when a problem with a student threatened to become more serious, Wilkens called the girl's mother, asking, "Can I send her home before I have to send her home?" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 10).

Some of Berry Hill's students noted the apparent discrepancy between the principal's "bark" and "bite." A fourth-grade girl, who had been sent to the office for chewing gum, said that

Wilkens had told her to call her parents. In a nonchalant, yet relieved tone, she described how neither parent could be reached: "It was on a Friday, so [Wilkens] said he'd call my mother on Monday, and he forgot about it" (TI, 6/2/83, pp. 10-11). Another student indicated that the principal's playground supervision had not prevented children from leaving the campus to go the store or to "go up behind the school" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 11). As we saw earlier, some of the more adventurous students had no qualms about sneaking away even while the principal was patrolling the grounds. We did, however, observe Wilkens telling a child who had scaled the back wall while retrieving a ball to ask permission to leave the grounds (FN, 9/13/82, p. 21). And at a staff meeting, the principal said that he would speak to the merchants in the area about the school's closed-campus policy. "I'll explain I don't want to cut into their profits, but I'm running a school here," he said (FN, 9/8/82, p. 10).

Many students, however, appreciated the principal's mild responses to misbehavior. In one rather amusing scenario, the principal caught a boy hiding behind a bush just beyond the campus fence. The student had just made a trip to a nearby 7-11 store. In fact, this enterprising young man had been operating quite a successful business--each day, he sneaked off campus to buy candy for his fellow students, earning a commission for his exploits. When questioned following his trip to the principal's office, he said that Wilkens had been "kind of nice" because he had put the candy in his desk and returned it to the boy on Friday (TI, 5/19/83, pp. 6-8).

Wilkens's reluctance to come down hard on students may have stemmed from a belief that student misbehavior could be traced to inconsistent practices on the part of teachers. For example, in March, the upper-circuit teachers complained of an increase in misbehavior. Children were talking back, not doing homework, and dawdling on the playground when it was time to come inside. The principal responded by pointing out that the teachers themselves had changed their practices over the course of the school year. Back in September, he said, the teachers had been out on the playground promptly to line up their classes. By March, they were letting one teacher do it. In other words, the teachers were more lax and the student behavior reflected that (FN, 3/22/83, p. 3).

To address the problems, Wilkens suggested that the upper-circuit teachers begin holding detention. He volunteered to take charge on Fridays if each teacher would supervise one day a week. The principal also organized several in-service meetings on discipline, with the eventual hope of formulating a schoolwide disciplinary policy--a hope that was not yet realized when our study ended, perhaps because the teachers wanted a policy that was much more elaborate than the few rules that Wilkens favored (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II; SO, 3/24/83, p. 2).

It is significant that although Wilkens indicated to teachers that they were partly responsible for the increase in disciplinary problems in the upper circuit, he did not allow this criticism to be passed on to the school's parents. According to one staff member:

> Some parents were sort of intimating about the behavior of the upper-grade children in the school. He just sort of leaned back in his usual comfortable way and said, "Sixth grade was always the worst grade for me to teach 'cause by this time, you know, the only thing you can try to do is just pray for June or something like that because they're so difficult to handle. They're really feeling their oats." And so this placated the people. Rather than say, "There's nothing wrong with the discipline in my school" or on the other hand, "Yes, these teachers are no good, they don't know how to handle discipline." He just brought in something, another aspect of looking at something. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 7)

When describing the problem to parents, Wilkens acknowledged that trouble was indeed present, but he went on to attribute the children's behavior to normal educational development. In doing so, he reminded parents of his own experience as a classroom teacher, assuring them that he was quite familiar with the various problems of dealing with children. Importantly, staff members felt that Wilkens had maintained that familiarity as an administrator. Said one teacher:

> He watches 'em [students] closely. He knows how they behave, and so when you go to him with maybe a problem or to discuss something, he's pretty versed in it already. (TI, 4/20/83, p. 7)

While consistency was one of Wilkens's chief concerns in implementing discipline policies, teachers were free to decide their own strategies for classroom management. For example, teachers followed no set policy for keeping records of student behavior. Some staff members carefully documented persistent problems for parent/teacher conferences (SFI, 4/18/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/27/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/19/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/31/83, p. 3; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 3); others kept no records at all (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 3; SFI, 3/31/83, p. 3). In like fashion, teachers' strategies for dealing with misbehaving students varied. Some teachers said they used assertive discipline techniques (FN, 3/9/83, p. 8; TI, 4/14/83, p. 1; TI, 4/18/83, p. 3), which Wilkens described at the beginning of the year as "the way I operate as far as students" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 22).

Other tactics, however, prevailed in different classrooms. In one class, when children returned from recess and entered the classroom quietly, the teacher had a nice comment for each of them (FN, 2/19/83, p. 1). She also had invented an imaginary "little mouse," which left little mouse-sized notes for children who had done a particularly good job or who just needed something nice said about them (FN, 2/19/83, p. 6). Some staff members extended this practice of praising students for good behavior to include the principal, their colleagues, and other students. Two teachers regularly took student work to Wilkens for special recognition (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 3). The principal was "very good about talking with the kids about it," said one of the teachers (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13). Another teacher brought a project completed by one of his problem students to the teachers' lunch room so that staff members could praise the child on something well done (FN, 3/24/83, p. 6). Still another used peer group pressure to encourage improved behavior (SFI, 5/19/83, p. 3).

In the kindergarten classroom, the teacher tried to forestall disciplinary problems by redirecting the children's energies. The teacher said that in order to combat her students' restlessness ("they're always moving"), she used finger plays, singing, and other rhythmic activity to get their attention (TI, 4/18/83, p. 5). This same teacher team-taught with another person and inadvertently discovered another tactic. She described what sometimes occurred when she and her partner disagreed about teaching techniques in front of the students:

> [The kids ask] "What's wrong? What's wrong?" And I'll say, "We're having a disagreement, all right?" And then we'll say, "Did we hit each other? Are we mad at each other? Are we kicking? Are we pulling? Are we mean?" They'll say, "No, but you're arguing." I said, "Because people argue." (TI, 4/18/83, p. 15)

One teacher who valued "a quiet classroom" (TI, 4/14/83, p. 3), employed the tactic of refocusing students' diverted attention: In one case, when he realized students were working on their homework, he remarked, "You're supposed to be listening. There's going to be something new" (FN, 3/24/83, p. 3). During another lesson, upon seeing a student reading the National Enquirer he simply took the newspaper and placed it on top of the bookcase (FN, 3/24/83, p. 4).

In another classroom, a teacher had established set routines to indicate to students what she was doing and what they were supposed to be doing. Consequently, students took responsibility for many of their activities. Without waiting for directions from the teacher, they moved themselves for a better seating arrangement to view a video (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3). And when the teacher prepared to use the overhead projector, she simply announced, "I'd like to begin," and students became quiet and focused their attention on her (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3). The atmosphere in this room was quiet and orderly; students worked steadily. The teacher said she often picked up disciplinary techniques from other teachers (TI, 4/13/83, p. 3).

Teachers also designed seating arrangements to facilitate classroom management control (FN, 3/24/83, p. 1). In one class, a boy who was known to have trouble sitting still was seated at the center of the room, which gave the instructor easy access if his behavior required special attention (FN, 2/16/83, p. 6).

The classroom interactions in one classroom, however, differed significantly from those in other classes in the upper circuit. The teacher of the Applied Life Sciences course adopted a dictatorial posture toward his students, often commanding them to sit down or stop talking (FN, 3/31/83, p. 3). If he placed the initials of misbehaving students on the board, the students were to report after school. No discussion of the matter was allowed (FN, 3/31/83, p. 1).

Yet, no matter which tactic they preferred, the Berry Hill staff as a whole felt that Wilkens was supportive of their disciplinary practices (TI, 3/10/83, p. 21; TI, 4/18/83, p. 8). They also agreed that sending students to the principal's office was usually a last resort (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 3; SFI, 3/31/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/18/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/20/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/27/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/19/83, p. 3; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 3; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 3). In one particular instance, Wilkens reinforced this perspective. A teacher came into the office to tell Wilkens about a student who had been giving her trouble. She had warned the student that she would send him to the principal if he did not shape up, but the child had continued to misbehave. Wilkens said he would isolate the boy, but suggested that perhaps the teacher would like to call the mother and have the student speak with her before sending the boy to the office (FN, 9/28/82, p. 19). Apparently, Wilkens wanted to limit his involvement in both routine and more serious disciplinary matters. He also announced to teachers that they had the right to suspend a student, but it was their responsibility to meet and discuss the matter with the parents (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13).

In summary, Wilkens's approach to discipline at Berry Hill during his first year was very low-key. Though he had definite opinions about the need to revise the school's disciplinary policy, he was reluctant to impose any changes on the school. He did insist on consistency from his teachers and attempted to use an increase in student misbehavior late in the year as an opportunity to focus attention on disciplinary policy as a whole.

Though he attempted to shroud his dealings with students in his office in a cloud of authoritarian mystery, Wilkens's interactions with the children tended to be humane and pleasant. He was also quite ready to inform teachers of what actions he had taken if they sent him a note describing the student's offense. Often, however, teachers failed to send the proper notes.

The principal believed in assertive discipline techniques but did not impose any particular strategy on his teachers, whose classroom practices varied widely. Staff members also expressed the belief that the principal supported their various disciplinary strategies, and on one occasion, felt that he had skillfully defended them against parent complaints.

Because Berry Hill was not known for having major discipline problems, one might not expect that the practices of teachers or the frequency of student misbehavior would change appreciably in the year that Wilkens assumed leadership. Still, one teacher commented that since Wilkens had come to the school, there were fewer problems with the students who had been "really misbehaving last year" (FN, 4/27/83, p. 4).

Interrelationships: An important element of the climate of schools is the nature of the interrelationships among the members of the school community: the students, staff, and parents. The quality of these day-to-day relationships may be the best evidence of the cohesiveness of a group in its commitment to the organization's goals. Positive relationships among the stakeholders in a school demonstrate fundamental agreement and satisfaction with the means and ends of the organization--agreement that has an effect on the organization's ability to carry out its mission (see Homans, 1950; Janis, 1972; Maslow, 1954; Zander, 1977).

The quality of interrelationships in the Berry Hill community changed noticeably during the course of Wilkens's first year at the school. Although occasional conflicts indicated that serious disagreements were by no means absent, comments by students, parents, and teachers suggested that Wilkens's emphasis on self- and mutual respect positively affected the daily interactions in and around the school. The reader may recall from our discussion of social curriculum that Wilkens was of the opinion that climate could be "learned." This opinion guided the principal as he sought to demonstrate to and teach students and teachers the importance of getting along in the "inside world" of the school.

In establishing a relationship of mutual respect between himself and Berry Hill's students, Wilkens first sought to interact with students as often as possible. He spent time on the playground during lunch, he lingered in the lobby following assemblies, and he visited classrooms during the school day to indicate to students that he was available to listen to their concerns. During these encounters, the principal made small talk, commenting on children's clothes or hair styles and complimenting them on their achievements. He also took time to assist students with their work and projects, indicating to them that their concerns were not too small to interest the principal. One student whom we interviewed said that he sometimes asked the principal to help him learn spelling words and abbreviations (TI, 6/2/83, pp. 4-5).

The tone of these encounters was as important as their frequency. Throughout his interactions with students, Wilkens was careful not to speak to the children in a condescending fashion. He addressed them in a respectful, adult-to-adult manner. "He treats children with respect," commented one staff member (TI, 3/10/83, p. 16). And one of the Berry Hill students concurred, saying of the principal, "He makes us be good, but he doesn't talk like a big shot like some [principals] do" (TI, 5/16/83, p. 3).

As another signal of his willingness to listen to student concerns, Wilkens had placed a paper tray--the attention-getting orange basket--in the main office. Children and teachers alike were encouraged to drop off notes, school projects, compositions--anything which they wanted to share with the principal. Wilkens was genuinely glad to receive all communications and responded to them promptly.

When responding to requests for changes in policies or practices, Wilkens attempted to give students responsibility for making important decisions. In our discussion of the school's social curriculum, we saw how Wilkens took advantage of the students' verbal ability by charging them with the task of selecting a photography studio to take school portraits. The students readily took to the task and evidenced maturity and intelligence in weighing the various options before making a final decision. The principal followed through on the process by allowing students themselves to inform the appropriate studio of their decision. Similarly, the principal participated in a Living with Nature project, which required that students assume the responsibility of raising funds for and planning a major outing. The teacher who was responsible for the project praised Wilkens's participation in the activities because "he didn't direct them [the children]. He let them make all the decisions" (TI, 3/9/83, p. 9).

The principal's willingness to pass on responsibilities to students was also evident in his responses to inquiries and requests during assemblies. At these gatherings, he often allowed for a question-and-answer period during which he could address or redirect issues which the students had raised. For example, at one assembly, the principal mentioned that he had received a letter asking about "fifth- and sixth-grade dances." Wilkens replied that he didn't really approve of dances for fifth and sixth graders. However, he said he would pass the letter on to the student council, and if they wanted to hold dances, he would support them (FN, 9/28/82, p. 8). During another session, Wilkens also solicited students' feedback on whether they would be interested in a T-shirt day (FN, 10/4/82, p. 2) and what they thought of students making a presentation about Berry Hill to the school district board (FN, 10/4/82, p. 3).

It was clear that the principal's tactics had led to a generally positive relationship between himself and Berry Hill's students. They described him as "nice" and commented on the friendly nature of his conversations with them. He was, according to one girl "like a big uncle. You can always come to him with your problems, and it's really nice" (TI, 5/16/83, p. 3). In light of our discussion of discipline, it is interesting to note the girl's choice of the word "uncle" rather than "father." It may suggest that the friendly rather than the authoritarian character of the principal seemed to come forth in these interactions. Thus, though they respected and liked the principal, Berry Hill's students did not necessarily see his presence as an overwhelming deterrent to their participation in some prohibited activities.

On the whole, however, Berry Hill's students seemed to get along with each other. The absence of data and participant recollection of fights or conflicts besides the occasional food fight suggests that these sorts of problems were rare at the school. Consequently, the principal was not called upon to make great changes in improving student behavior toward one another. Though Wilkens used the daily assemblies as forums for commenting upon proper behavior toward one another, the incidents prompting such comments were relatively minor actions of disrespect for others.

The relationship between Berry Hill's students and teachers did, however, require some shoring up. Early in the year, teachers tended to view their students as smart, but requiring constant prodding to produce quality work on a consistent basis. At one staff meeting, teachers complained that students were turning in sloppy homework assignments (SO, 11/29/82, p. 1), and others interpreted their students' articulate questionings of disciplinary or academic decisions as indications of disrespect (FN, 3/22/83, p. 4). It should also be remembered that teachers did report an increase in discipline problems in the upper circuit during the spring of the year. As a result of the principal's support, however, some teachers were more willing to attempt projects which gave students a greater degree of responsibility. The Living With Nature project and the puppet shows were two such examples (TI, 3/9/83, p. 9; FN, 6/2/83, pp. 1-5). And staff members credited the principal with improving their attitudes toward students. According to one teacher, Wilkens had created "a feeling of being comfortable, a feeling of feeling happy about coming to work," which in turn had made staff "more open to [their] children" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 9). This teacher went on to point to the effectiveness of Wilkens's modeling strategy, saying, "There's a general harmony of understanding because you've seen him [Wilkens] talk to kids" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 16).

The Berry Hill community was affluent and relatively stable. And as is the case in many upper middle-class communities, the parents tended to be quite involved in their children's education. This involvement was exercised through parent groups which were quite active and important aspects of the Berry Hill school community. But parents also attended to their children's education on an individual basis. They were prone to "drop in" to observe teachers in order to determine which staff member best suited their children. In fact, it seemed that parent loyalty to the Berry Hill school as a whole took a back seat to parent loyalty to individual teachers throughout the "hills" schools in the district. Although families tended to stay in the community for a number of years, the readiness of parents to skip certain teachers at Berry Hill in search of the "best" teacher in the district at each grade level created a yearly turnover rate of about 10% in a school of approximately 300 students (TI, 9/7/82, p. 20). Halting the leapfrogging of children from school to school was one of Wilkens's primary concerns during his first year at Berry Hill (FN, 4/22/83, pp. 10, 11, 13).

Wilkens noted that Berry Hill's parents were quite efficient at expressing and enacting their concerns in regard to their children's education. According to Wilkens, these parents were more skilled at fund raising than parents at the schools where he had previously served as principal (FN, 9/13/82, p. 6). For example, Berry Hill's Parent/Faculty Club, which had a core group of about 30 parents, had raised a considerable sum of money to sponsor both the computer program (FN, 10/4/82, pp. 6-7) and the motor-development program, which included an aide and consultant. In addition, the club had given each teacher $50 to spend as he or she wished for classroom materials. Money raised by the club was also used to pay for the school's new playground structure (FN, 10/6/82, p. 1). The extent to which Berry Hill's parents were willing to commit their considerable skills to supporting the school was revealed in a club policy, which prohibited any fund raising that depended upon selling "outside" items like candy. All the money was earned through fairs, barbeques, and raffles. At the yearly spring carnival parent-handcrafted items were sold (FN, 5/19/83, p. 3). Other major fund raisers were a yearlong paper drive and a walk-a-thon.

Directing this high level of parent commitment into constructive channels required considerable interpersonal skills. Wilkens, who considered himself a "human relations specialist," felt well suited to the job (SO, 1/12/83, p. 17). His teachers concurred in assessing the principal's ability to deal with parents (TI, 2/25/83, p. 12; TI, 3/9/83, p. 8; TI, 3/10/83, p. 7). One said:

> I think probably one of the most important areas for a principal to be skilled [in] is with parents, and I think [our principal] has that [skill]. That can make a real difference--night or day--in what kind of cooperation you get from parents, and from the children. (TI, 4/20/83, p. 4)

An example of Wilkens's ability to elicit cooperation from parents is his first meeting with the volunteer classroom aides, Berry Hill's other formal parent group. At that meeting, attended by 17 mothers, Wilkens made a semiformal speech, telling the mothers that they were welcome, needed, and important to the school. Then he told them that the more time they spent in the classrooms, the more they would learn (FN, 10/6/82, pp. 2-5). In making the speech Wilkens was careful to emphasize that though he valued the presence of school aides, their position in the classroom was that of students and not experts.

Wilkens faced a similar challenge when dealing with "drop-in" parents. Berry Hill's parents often made unscheduled visits to see the principal and teachers (TI, 9/7/82, p. 11). The practice was so widespread during the weeks before school started that Wilkens became concerned that meeting these parents would consume too much of his time. In response, he had established a routine for handling parent visits. He told Milly, the secretary, that he would be in the office at specified times to see parents. Then, at the opening assembly on the first day of school, he announced to the approximately 25 parents who were in attendance that they were welcome to visit the school, but they should come willing to work. He elaborated:

> We don't mean marking papers, but to mix and mingle, be ready to help--maybe hear a child read, etc. (FN, 9/13/82, p. 5)

He published this same announcement in the Wednesday Flier, a newsletter regularly sent home to parents with school bulletins and teacher notes. By emphasizing that parents were expected to work, he undercut their role as critical observers. Fortunately for Wilkens, the number of parents who attempted to place a great demand on his time and that of his teachers proved to be a small minority (FN, 9/13/82, p. 6).

Drop-in visits by parents were, however, only a small part of the larger practice of "shopping" for the best teacher among all the "hills" schools. Wilkens said:

> I have a concern with the community. They tend to shop. I feel like they should stick with [the neighboring schools] and say the heck with Berry Hill, because I think a kid is much better off in going through one entire school than coming here and then saying, "Well, third grade, I'm going to Everson, but I'm coming back next year." I feel like [saying], "No, don't come back next year. Stay over there. You know, your kid'll be much better off". . . . So that is one of the things the community will have to get used to. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 19)

And in at least one case, Wilkens communicated this sentiment directly to some parents who were threatening to transfer their child to another school, as described in the section on "Structures and Placement" (FN, 9/28/82, p. 3).

The inflammatory potential of parental involvement at Berry Hill was realized during the controversy surrounding the Applied Life Sciences course. During the fall semester, the course became the target of fervent opposition from some parents, while drawing strong support from others. Many parents expressed their views--some in rather emotional terms--at an evening school meeting with district personnel present. The arguments made headlines in the local paper (FN, 11/18/82, pp. 4-6).

Although Wilkens had played an instrumental role in bringing McCauley to the school and had displayed slogans from the course in his office, he did not receive the brunt of the criticism from parents. Rather than taking a defensive posture, Wilkens encouraged parents to become involved in solving the problem. He scheduled a meeting which was to treat the problem as a part of an investigation of the school's curriculum; the meeting was chaired by the president of the Parent/Faculty Club. Following the meeting, Wilkens issued a parent opinion survey on points that had been brought up (FN, 11/18/82, p. 5). As mentioned before, he later canceled the course.

The arguments over the course did represent a major threat to the harmonious atmosphere that Wilkens was creating at Berry Hill. One teacher, who had noted that "the school year started out wonderfully well . . . everybody was enthusiastic" went on to lament the negative effects of seeing a colleague "torn apart" (TI, 3/9/83, p. 3). Yet the rift between parents and teachers was short-lived. After the meeting in which the course was discussed, the teachers and principal received a letter from parents. The letter, printed in inch-high letters on shelf paper with a decorative border attractively drawn, said:

> Dear Louis and Staff:
> Have we told you recently how much we appreciate all you do for our children; the long hours, the hard work, the thought and energy you put into your job. What? You haven't heard us? Well, it has been very windy lately and voices from the heart are soft spoken. So, until the storm quiets down, here is our visual whisper of esteem and affection. Thank you, The parents of the Children of Berry Hill.
> P.S. We are not signing our names because although many things are able to be written on the head of a pin, there is just not room here for all of us. (FN, 1/5/83, pp. 2-3)

The parents attempted to ensure that this "storm" of protest did not cloud the fact they shared a sense of purpose with the Berry Hill staff. Their concern indicated that any rifts were on the mend even as they were being created.

The other major parental concern emerged during the second half of the year and related to the school's program for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). Because Wilkens felt that numerous district requirements placed too heavy a burden on his small teaching staff, he had not yet set up a GATE committee; he had, however, indicated on various forms that such a committee did exist (FN, 9/21/82, p. 3). When parents approached him with questions concerning the existence of a committee, he invited them to be the parent members, began immediate investigation of the means and ways to run a GATE writing program, and planned to schedule next year's classes with an emphasis on GATE clusters (FN, 5/12/83, pp. 2-4). As we will see in the section on student assignments, Wilkens's decision to emphasize clusters was a response to parent demand that high-achieving students be tracked.

The principal's actions in regard to the Applied Life Sciences course and the GATE committee are indicative of his general approach to handling parent concerns. Whether called upon to address classroom transfers (FN, 9/28/82, pp. 2-3, 14); retention of students (FN, 9/13/82, p. 9); dissatisfaction over homework assignments (FN, 9/28/82, p. 4); or possible racial conflicts between kids (FN, 4/22/83, p. 13), the principal sought to bring parents into the process of solving the problem, emphasizing that he and the parents shared a common cause--the child--and thus, were friends in a joint effort (FN, 9/28/82, p. 22). In accounting for his success in dealing with parents Wilkens said:

> I think I understand the suburban mentality, because I was raised in it. These peoples' ideas don't vary too much from my parents' and from my own. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 19)

In Wilkens's view, the common cause he shared with parents was enhanced by a common background.

The principal also influenced the manner in which teachers interacted with parents. One teacher regularly involved the principal in her in-service programs for parent volunteers by bringing the participants in to meet the principal (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 6). Another teacher drew upon the principal's expertise in managing parent/teacher conferences by asking his assistance. Wilkens sat in on a conference with her and then gave her "specific guidelines" and some general advice (TI, 4/14/83, p. 6).

Besides providing his staff with techniques for getting along with parents, Wilkens helped improve dramatically the relations between teachers and the principalship and between teachers and their colleagues. "You're working with a staff who's been really messed over," said one teacher at Wilkens's first faculty meeting (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13). The former principal, a domineering and demanding woman, had engendered tension among the faculty to the point that the standing jokes for the year revolved around her and some of the projects she had attempted. To undo the damage that had been done by his predecessor, Wilkens used three tactics. He stressed his trust in his staff members, he attempted to establish a personal relationship with them, and he supported them when they tried to incorporate something new into their curricula.

His success was evident in that teachers visibly relaxed as the semester progressed. As one teacher said:

> When you have a principal who generates this type of harmonious feeling . . . you in turn are more relaxed with one another. It's the chain effect. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 9)

And as the year wore on, teachers were more likely to gather informally to converse after school. Their lunchroom chatter went from the verbal sparring that was common at the beginning of the year to general talk about students and the projects they were doing.

Wilkens conveyed his trust in his staff members by telling them, "I trust you to act as professionals" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 22). He went on to explain that this meant that he was not going to nitpick about minor rules. He told teachers that while attendance at meetings was not mandatory, they would be held responsible for the information missed. He also said that he would understand if an emergency delayed a teacher's prompt arrival, and that he did not expect an explanation if a teacher needed to be excused. However, he made it clear to the staff that they were not to take advantage of this flexibility.

This relaxed, personable style characterized most of Wilkens's interactions with his staff. He often wandered down the hall or into the faculty lounge to chat with teachers. Both doors to his office were open at all times except when a private conference was taking place. As a result of his open-door policy, teachers felt comfortable in approaching Wilkens to discuss various concerns (TI, 3/9/83, p. 10; TI, 3/10/83, p. 7; TI, 4/18/83, p. 10).

Wilkens also used regular observances to cement his personal relationship with his staff. Just as he did with students, the principal took time during the assemblies to acknowledge staff birthdays:

> I think birthdays are special, so I try and keep a list of staffs' birthdays, so when they have a birthday, you can give 'em . . . at least an acknowledgement, a little insignificant thing that becomes a major thing because it is your birthday and somebody remembered it. That's one of the things we'll do around here for staff climate. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 39)

Despite the principal's efforts, however, some staff members felt he was not supportive enough. One staff member complained that the principal did not give enough "strokes" (TI, 4/13/83, p. 7). Another felt the principal could offer more public compliments. In reference to a meeting where Wilkens told parents that Berry Hill was the best school in the district, she said, "It would have been nice to have said that to the whole staff, too. He really didn't do that" (TI, 2/26/83, p. 12).

Yet we did see instances where Wilkens did not miss the opportunity to compliment his teachers, particularly those whom he felt were most in need of "strokes" from the principal. For example, one day when the children had been sent home early from school because of a power failure, two children returned to a teacher's class, claiming that they were bored at home. Wilkens said to the teacher, "See, you thought your teaching was having no effect. What a compliment. They can't stay away" (FN, 11/18/82, p. 3). The teacher, a rather insecure man, beamed.

Staff members did note occasional drawbacks to Wilkens's personable style. The teasing manner that he used to put staff members at their ease made some teachers uncomfortable. One stated that Wilkens's readiness to respond to staff concerns with a joke was somewhat unprofessional (TI, 4/28/83, p. 5). Similarly, another teacher, upon being met with the principal's humor, found it difficult to refocus on her original concern. Our observer noted, "[Wilkens's] teasing doesn't allow the more professional aspect of [that teacher] to shine through" (SO, 4/20/83, p. 1). However, another teacher who was on the receiving end responded differently. Doris, who had taught under Wilkens at another school, said, "I feel there are certain times when he has a sense of humor when he's just with the teachers and it sort of makes us relax" (TI, 4/18/83, p. 7). And Wilkens's behavior did sometimes have a positive effect. For example, a staff member who had become upset during a meeting calmed down as a result of teasing and a hug from Wilkens. She was then able to face her problem (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19). Nonetheless, our field observer did report that the principal toned down this behavior as the semester went on, and she suggested these jokes were Wilkens's way of breaking the ice with teachers whom he was just getting to know.

Others felt that Wilkens's manner hindered him from acting with authority at key moments. One teacher described a faculty meeting in which another staff member openly antagonized her colleagues during a discussion of a social studies textbook pilot program:

> I looked around the whole table and I sensed everybody's face just being really strained and uncomfortable and I think everyone was kind of waiting for Louis to say something. And he didn't. So I did. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 19)

While describing Wilkens as a "gentle, caring kind of man" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 21), this teacher felt the situation had called for the principal to be more outspoken than Wilkens had been. At a previous meeting, the troublesome teacher in question had sparked similar criticisms from other staff members, criticisms that had been reported to Wilkens (FN, 1/5/83, pp. 10-12).

Getting teachers to relax and feel good about themselves was Wilkens's way of encouraging them to attempt new projects, even when the attempt might end in failure. Wilkens urged teachers to observe classes, seek out museums, and use other outside resources. The teacher who undertook the extensive Living with Nature project attributed her success to Wilkens's support and assistance. She said:

> I didn't think it could be arranged, and I talked to him and he really helped me--and I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for him. I laid it all out and he said he'd help--and he did. I couldn't have done it without his support because he took a group [of students] and worked with them. (TI, 3/9/83, p. 9)

Wilkens's strategies for dealing with staff had definitely improved teachers' perceptions of the principalship. This became readily apparent when the principal had to leave for two weeks for a family emergency. During Wilkens's absence, several teachers made it a point to tell our fieldworker that they missed Louis's reassuring and cheerful presence (FN, 10/28/82, p. 12). When Wilkens returned to the school, one of the teachers presented him with a gift from the staff, as a way of saying they were happy he was back (FN, 11/12/82, p. 5).

Although the controversy surrounding the Applied Life Sciences course somewhat threatened the feeling of staff camaraderie that Wilkens had attempted to nurture at Berry Hill, it also prompted teachers to make a show of unity in the face of parental criticism. Though most of the staff had philosophical differences with the teacher of that course, all of the teachers attended the meeting and defended their colleague. Wilkens noted the beneficial effects of the temporary parent/teacher split in the debate over Applied Life Sciences, saying that "like a football game" it had sparked team spirit in the staff (SO, 11/29/82, p. 1).

Most staff members, however, pointed to Wilkens's presence, rather than any particular event, as the cause of a general improvement in the school's climate. In the words of one teacher:

> He's [Wilkens] been here only seven months, but . . . there's a different atmosphere in this school than there was in the last three years. He is easygoing and he's flexible and I really have the feeling that he's confident about his staff. So I feel better about myself and I feel better about the whole staff, because the morale is just much stronger; it's much higher--people can walk around and smile, right? And it's so important to laugh and have some camaraderie between each other. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 4)

Though the teacher may not have realized it, smiling was also a part of Wilkens's planned strategy for improving the school climate. As he told our observer at the beginning of the school year, "Now you can't smile all the time, I realize that. But somebody should be smiling most of the time . . . feeling good" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21).

In summary, improving interrelationships among the various groups of the Berry Hill learning community was central to Principal Wilkens's approach to climate. Through staff meetings and informal encounters with teachers and students in the halls, Wilkens tried to communicate the feeling that everyone should feel good about being in school. He treated both students and staff with respect, and they seemed to respond positively to his attitude toward them.

When dealing with parents of the school's children, Wilkens attempted to emphasize their role as collaborators rather than their role as critical observers. Parents coming to the principal with concerns were often urged to join committees or to contribute their opinions about how problems could be solved. The principal also tried to stem the tide of parental "shopping" for teachers by indicating that they should regard any transfers of students from Berry Hill as a permanent move.

Berry Hill's Instructional Organization

Instructional organization is our collective term for the technical features of instructional coordination and delivery to which the principals in our study attended. For example, when acting to improve their instructional organizations, our principals manipulated class size and composition, scheduling, staff assignments, the scope and sequence of curriculum, the distribution of instructional materials, and even teaching styles. We suggest that the instructional climate--the concept we discussed in the immediately preceding section--influences students' and staff members' feelings and expections about their schools, and that the instructional organization delivers the reality.

In this section, we describe in greater detail the instructional system of Berry Hill Elementary School, highlighting the content of instruction, class structures and teacher and student placement, pedagogy, and staff development. As in the previous section on the instructional climate, our purpose is to discuss the beliefs and activities of the principal that influence these important factors of schooling.

The Content of Instruction: Curriculum, subject matter, classes, topics, texts, program, schedule, and syllabus are a confusing array of terms often used by teachers and principals to describe what is taught in their classrooms or schools. Although these terms are somewhat analogous, they are not synonymous in that they tend to blur substance, method, and organization. In this section we wish to discuss the content of instruction at

Berry Hill and examine how that content was organized and determined. In so doing, we are discussing curriculum in the manner of Dunkin and Biddle (1974) who used that term as a broad concept for thinking about specific subject areas. But it was, perhaps, Dewey (1916) who best defined the content of instruction and underscored its importance in his discussion of "subject matter":

> It consists of the facts observed, recalled, read, and talked about, and the ideas suggested, in course of a development of a situation having a purpose. . . . What is the significance . . . ?
>
> In the last analysis, all that the educator can do is modify stimuli so that response will as surely as is possible result in the formation of desirable intellectual and emotional dispositions. Obviously . . . the subject matter . . . [has] intimately to do with this business of supplying an environment. (pp. 180-181)

Although other factors such as district grade-level norms and parent expectations exerted some influence on what was taught at Berry Hill, the textbooks chosen for the school as a whole by its teachers from an array of district-approved selections formed the core of the curriculum (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I).

Of course, not all of the school's teachers relied heavily on textbooks. One teacher, for example, had implemented a completely individualized math program (SO, 4/28/83, p. 2), and another did not use the official reading texts (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I). And those who did use the approved texts sometimes supplemented lessons with their own materials (FN, 2/16/83, p. 4; FN, 2/16/83, p. 7; FN, 2/19/83, p. 6; FN, 3/31/83, p. 1; FN, 4/27/83, p. 2). One eschewed the reading text and integrated reading instruction with other content areas (FN, 9/21/82, p. 3; FN, 11/18/82, p. 5). This teacher also objected to the guides for instruction provided by publishers:

> I don't use the dumb teachers' manual. I think if you went by the book, if you followed the teachers' manual, and you didn't use it creatively, you'd go from question one to question two and question three, and you really then would not hear what the child was saying. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 3)

These qualifications aside, however, it is correct to say that instruction at Berry Hill was largely equivalent to textbooks. In fact, Wilkens said that his strategy for changing curriculum at the school centered on "weaning teachers from the books" (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3). He saw the purchase of materials as an important avenue for influencing curriculum (TI, 9/7/82, p.

33). And in a letter to the assistant superintendent, Wilkens expressed his ultimate goal of implementing a less book-oriented "program that meets the assessed needs of children" (FN, 11/29/82, pp. 2-3).

Wilkens's methods for making these changes, however, were characteristically low-key. During the selection of math and reading texts, for example, Wilkens stayed well to the background. According to one teacher, "He [Wilkens] didn't sway us in what he thought was best--he let us make the choice" (TI, 4/18/83, p. 16). And though the principal arranged for the school to pilot a social studies textbook series (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3), he did not require teachers to use the texts. The results of the pilot program, however, may illustrate the weakness of Wilkens's strategy to soft-pedal change.

Wilkens had hoped that by providing the new social studies texts as supplementary materials, he would encourage his staff to develop and expand their curricula (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3; FN, 4/22/83, p. 11). This, however, was not the case. Perhaps because teachers were not required to use the new texts, the books remained unused or did not get distributed at all, despite an in-service presentation on the subject (FN, 3/24/83, p. 1; FN, 3/30/83, p. 3). One teacher continued to have students team up to use an older set of books, and when asked why he was not using the new series, said that he thought the material was the same (FN, 3/30/83, p. 1).

Wilkens attributed the reluctance to use the new text to his staff's unwillingness or inability to think in terms of units rather than texts. He decided to request teachers to submit plans for their social studies program for the following year, hoping that teachers would be "forced" to look at the new books and begin thinking about their approaches to curriculum (FN, 5/12/83, p. 7).

Wilkens also made an effort to overhaul the language arts curriculum. He scheduled a series of three in-service meetings, during which he reacquainted teachers with district curriculum guidelines and established a new set of written curriculum standards. At the first of these meetings, Wilkens passed out the district reading and language arts handbook which listed the minimum content for each grade. He asked teachers to look at what should be covered and to make notes of what other skills they would like to add at each grade, so that teachers in higher grades could be assured that their students had covered these areas. The principal emphasized that he did not care where teachers got their curriculum standards, as long as everyone agreed upon what was to be done (FN, 1/5/83, pp. 8-9). At the second and third meetings (described in the "Staff Development" section), staff members did produce a set of standards. But again, because Wilkens soft-pedaled his charge to teachers, the results were minimal. The high achievement level of Berry Hill's students might have supported major modifications in language arts expectations, but the staff settled for changing the district standards only slightly.

Another way that the principal sought to introduce a more structured, content-based curriculum was by introducing a basic skills curriculum kit, which all principals had received at a district meeting. The kit, geared to giving students those skills required for standardized tests of achievement like the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), provided lesson plans, curriculum objectives, teaching exercises, and pre- and post-test measurements; some Berry Hill teachers used it as a supplementary method of practicing for the CTBS (FN, 2/16/83, p. 2; TI, 3/10/83, p. 18). A teacher with whom Wilkens had discussed the kit praised it highly. He exclaimed:

> You could run a whole curriculum on this kit. . . . What Louis and I have been discussing was the idea of using this Basis kit as a curriculum basis for the total school. . . . So as I see it this would bring about a uniformity throughout the grades. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 18)

Despite his belief that a schoolwide curriculum coordinated around such a kit was an "interesting concept" and "radical approach," he did not think making such a change was a realistic objective (TI, 3/10/83, pp. 18-19). Neither did any other staff members support making the kit a central focus of the curriculum.

Wilkens also used other means to encourage change. He presented brochures to teachers about a regional spelling bee and a mathematics program; he asked a teacher to investigate a writing project; and he provided teachers a "wish pile" of catalogs from which they could order new materials (SO, 4/14/83, pp. 1-2).

Continuing efforts made by the principal to change the content of instruction at Berry Hill were in the areas of the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program and in science instruction. Early in the year, Wilkens voiced criticism to the assistant superintendent that the school's only attempt to meet district GATE standards was to give the children more work. A genuine GATE program, he felt, was not one that gave students more of the basic program, but one which added challenges to and enriched the basic program (FN, 11/29/82, pp. 2-3).

Some parents had begun complaining about the inadequacies of the GATE program early in the spring (FN, 3/22/83, p. 9), but only one parent and one faculty member attended a meeting called by the principal to discuss the GATE issue (FN, 3/24/83, p. 10; FN, 5/16/83, p. 1). This parent, who had a Ph.D. in criminology from a local university, had published four books, and had researched the statutes regarding GATE programs, suggested that Berry Hill's program was not in compliance with state standards.

Despite the poor attendance at the meeting, Wilkens, who was already in agreement with the parent's sentiments, began to make some changes. He brought in a language arts specialist and the district coordinator for GATE to evaluate the school's program. According to Wilkens, district personnel had stopped coming to Berry Hill after the former principal had repeatedly refused to cooperate with the main office. By contrast, Wilkens actively solicited district involvement. He considered it his responsibility to know the curriculum programs, consultants, and resource materials which were available at the district level. As a result of the evaluations, two teachers were hired to teach writing to GATE children in a pullout program (FN, 5/16/83, p. 1). And for the following year, Wilkens arranged for GATE students to be clustered for instruction by classroom teachers in a "qualitatively different curriculum for at least 200 minutes per week" (FN, 5/12/83, p. 4). This curriculum could include classes in physiology, computer programming, and laboratory sciences.

The principal also directed his efforts toward improving the limited science program at the basic level. According to Wilkens, the school's budget was too limited to support a program for the current year (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I). Instead, a prep teacher taught science for one hour each week to all classes. During the spring semester, however, Wilkens announced that he would like to develop a science curriculum for the following year. Accordingly, the SIP coordinator began planning a schoolwide science program that combined the district requirements and the CTBS content areas (FN, 5/12/83, p. 5).

There was some evidence that Wilkens's efforts to get teachers "out of the books" (FN, 4/22/83, p. 11) were meeting with success. At the principal's suggestion, one teacher did take his class on science excursions to the zoo and the local community science center. The second/third grade teacher had responded to Wilkens's "wish pile" by ordering books on puppetry, which she used to produce several puppet shows in her classroom (SO, 4/14/83, pp. 1-2). This same teacher, who had attended the writing workshop at the principal's request, incorporated some of the ideas in her class (SO, 4/14/83, p. 1); and the staff member who taught his students about the stock market cited Wilkens's support as crucial to his efforts (TI, 3/10/83, p. 10). The Living with Nature project mentioned elsewhere was, perhaps, the most important example. Wilkens was so impressed with the project that he considered implementing it schoolwide as a way of creating a distinctive character for Berry Hill School (FN, 4/22/83, p. 10).

Despite the changes that Wilkens made, staff members did not think that Wilkens had exerted much influence on their approach to instructional content (SO, 4/14/83, p. 1). Teachers were more likely to mention the School Improvement Program coordinator in that regard (TI, 3/9/83, p. 14; TI, 4/14/83, p. 10; TI, 4/18/83, p. 17). One teacher said he felt Wilkens didn't really understand curriculum (SO, 4/27/83, p. 1), while a kindergarten teacher said that Wilkens "just knows that we know what has to be taught" (TI, 4/20/83, p. 8).

Again, Wilkens's approach to implementing change may be the answer here. The principal actually did make numerous comments regarding curriculum in conversations with teachers, but phrased them as suggestions rather than as directives (SO, 4/14/83, p. 1). Early in the year, he had told staff members that he had "no big plans" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 3). He preferred that teachers tell him what they wanted (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19). His strategy, as he said elsewhere, was to make teachers "want to change" rather than accepting change because they were forced to by the principal.

Structures and Placement: In the previous section, we described what was taught at Berry Hill School and why it was taught. "Structures and Placement" explains how students and teachers were dispersed in order to deliver or receive that content. By structures, we mean the classifications of social groups in schools: for example, grade levels or grade-level clusters, classes or classrooms, or skill-level groups.

Sometimes the definitions of such groups are largely dependent upon the physical spaces prescribed within the limits of a building's architecture. In that case, the composition of groups may be determined by how many youngsters fit into a space and by how many such spaces are available in a school. In other situations groups may be more fluid, as when children move individually from classroom to classroom during a school day based on criteria such as achievement levels in various subjects (see "Pedagogy" for our discussion of within-classroom grouping).

In either case, a social context for learning is created. Cohorts of students are defined and maintained, sometimes with remarkable longevity, which can have varying impact on any member of the cohort. Students' progress can be impeded or accelerated; students may become stereotyped as "bright" or "slow" and inflexibly assigned accordingly; and teachers may develop expectations for students' capacities for learning that influence the nature of their instruction (see Brophy, 1973; Brophy & Good, 1974).

Teaching assignments are also an important element of school structure. Such assignments may be based on teachers' previous experiences, expertise, or preferences, or on administrative concerns regarding staff development, staff cohesiveness, or teachers' personalities and/or teaching styles. Bringing together specific teachers with individual students or student groups helps define the social context of instruction and influences the academic experience of children. (See Barnett & Filby, 1984; Filby & Barnett, 1982; and Filby, Barnett, & Bossert, 1982 for descriptions of how the social context of instruction influences students' perceptions and the rate at which materials are presented to students.)

The overall point is that one of the most familiar aspects of schools--classrooms containing a teacher and a group of students--is a critical factor in successful instruction. As such, the assignment of students and teachers to classrooms or their more fluid counterparts should be a primary concern of principals (Bossert et al., 1982). This section describes the role of Berry Hill's principal in these decisions.

Three elements affected school-level class structure at Berry Hill. The first was a decision made by the previous principal in conjunction with the SIP coordinator to "departmentalize" grades four through six; departmentalization required that students be grouped by ability across classrooms and across grade levels. The other two factors were the "window-shopping" tendencies of Berry Hill's parents and the school's relatively small enrollment. Both contributed to the creation of six combined-grade classrooms at Berry Hill. In fact, only three of the school's classrooms were single-grade classes, and one of these (the kindergarten) was a team-taught class.

Under departmentalization, students at the upper grade levels were divided into groups on the basis of math scores and teacher recommendations. Teachers were then assigned to give instruction in a particular subject area and students rotated from teacher to teacher receiving instruction for math four times a week and in other subjects twice a week. Departmentalization operated two hours a day Monday through Thursday. Students remained in their homerooms for social studies and reading, the latter of which had not been departmentalized to accommodate one teacher who preferred to integrate reading instruction with content areas (FN, 9/21/82, p. 3; FN, 11/18/82, p. 5).

Berry Hill's enrollment of approximately 300 students made it one of the smaller schools in the district. This low enrollment meant that at the primary grade levels the number of students sometimes exceeded that which could fit into a single classroom. The surplus, however, was too small to fill a second class. Thus, it was necessary to combine grade levels in two of the primary-circuit classrooms, creating a first/second-grade classroom and a second/third-grade classroom. Two kindergarten classes, which had been combined in a team-teaching arrangement, and two single-grade classrooms for the first and third grades rounded out the primary circuit. In addition, specialists serving all grade levels provided supplementary instruction in science and music, as well as pullout programs on a referral basis in special education, motor development, and speech (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II; FN, 3/24/83, p. 7). Although enrollment might have made it possible to have more single-graded classes at the upper grade levels, the previous principal had discovered that combined-grade classes made it easier for her to accommodate parent requests (SO, 11/29/82, pp. 3, 6). As a result, combination classes predominated throughout the school.

As a new principal, Wilkens did not make many changes in the classroom organization at Berry Hill. His most significant act was to arrange a staggered schedule for the primary circuit, which would allow teachers to supervise directly all students for reading (FN, 9/8/82, p. 8). The principal believed that no teacher could manage more than two reading groups at a time. He was also uneasy with the practice of giving an aide responsibility for supervising reading seatwork, a strategy which was common before Wilkens arrived (FN, 9/8/82, p. 8). The staggered schedule, which was used at many other schools in the district, meant that half the students in the first, second, and third grades attended school from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the other half from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II).

Anticipating that the staggered schedule might create day-care problems for parents, Wilkens negotiated with a preschool operating at Berry Hill's facility to provide paid before- and after- school programs. When worried parents called prior to the opening of school about the scheduling change, he was thus able to reassure them that their needs could be taken care of (TI, 9/7/82, p. 24; FN, 9/13/82, pp. 5-6, 10). In the end, however, Wilkens did not receive any major complaints about the schedule change (FN, 9/21/82, p. 3), and there proved to be no demand for the paid care program (FN, 10/4/82, p. 5).

Another major change was initiated as a result of concerns by both the principal and parents. The school's GATE program was inadequate by district standards (FN, 11/29/82, pp. 2-3). Although parental interest seemed to flag when Wilkens called a meeting to discuss the issue, the principal did use the opportunity to have the program evaluated by district personnel. Eventually, two writing teachers were hired to teach GATE children on a pullout basis (FN, 5/16/83, p. 1). As described in our discussion of "The Content of Instruction," other alterations in the GATE program were planned for the following year.

Other than these changes and the creation of the team-taught classroom at the kindergarten level (see the section below on staff assignments), Wilkens left Berry Hill's classroom structure intact, preferring to observe how the school functioned and concentrate on gaining teachers' cooperation. He elicited staff cooperation by supporting minor changes requested by staff members (TI, 4/18/83, p. 8; TI, 4/28/83, p. 8). For example, teachers in the primary circuit initiated a limited exchange of students for reading, spelling, and math (FN, 1/19/83, pp. 12-13; TI, 4/14/83, p. 8; TI, 4/28/83, p. 8); Wilkens approved the exchanges (TI, 4/18/83, p. 8). A teacher described Wilkens's role:

> Many times we're able to work between ourselves as teachers . . . if we have a child who might need to go to another room for reading or another room for spelling . . . [we will] go to Louis, lay out the reasons why we think this is educationally sound. He'll listen to it, he will then evaluate it, and he'll make the final judgment as to what shall

> be done. But he will listen to us, and I feel this makes us as teachers feel more positive towards ourselves and the school. (TI, 4/18/83, p. 8)

Wilkens also met with teachers to work out logistics concerning class size. When seven students transferred out of the first/second grade class, leaving that class underenrolled, the teacher of the other first-grade class arranged, with Wilkens's help, to send some of her top students to the underenrolled combined class. The first-grade teacher then filled the vacancies in her class by taking in some advanced kindergarten students (FN, 1/19/83, pp. 12-17).

Wilkens played a similarly supportive role in coordinating the upper-circuit departmentalization. At a fall meeting to work out details, Wilkens told teachers that they had two weeks to decide on the "hard core" curriculum and that they should settle among themselves what subjects each would teach and whether students or teachers should rotate classes; he wanted only to be informed of their decisions (FN, 9/8/82, pp. 18-19). Wilkens and the SIP coordinator later met with the teachers, and as a group they made final arrangements.

As he began to look forward to the next year, however, Wilkens took a more active role in altering the school-level class structure. In the wake of the controversial incident involving the Applied Life Sciences class, Wilkens proposed the idea of reevaluating departmentalization (FN, 11/29/82, p. 3). First, teachers were asked to list the pros and cons of the program. Although staff members pointed out that the program wasted time in moving students from class to class, allowed them less flexibility in teaching, and was not optimally effective because students were ability-grouped in math only, they assured the principal that "it can be done," and congratulated themselves that the program was working rather well (FN, 11/12/82, pp. 1-4).

Parent input was then solicited through a questionnaire that Wilkens distributed. The questionnaire asked parents whether they believed the program had improved the school's educational program. In their responses 20 parents favored departmentalization, 10 did not, and 12 were uncertain (FN, 1/5/83, p. 3). Wilkens interpreted the response to mean that "parents want [departmentalization]" (FN, 4/22/83, p. 9) and began planning for the following year.

Wilkens wanted to ability-group children for instruction in all subjects. In conjunction with the SIP coordinator, he began working on a plan to incorporate his preference (FN, 4/22/83, p. 10; FN, 5/12/83, p. 4). They devised a schedule in which all teachers would teach all subjects, but students in grades four through six would be grouped according to ability for reading, language arts, and science as well as math (FN, 5/12/83, p. 4).

As well as retaining the departmentalization program, Wilkens decided to keep the large number of combination classes. Interestingly, Wilkens did not support combined classes and was aware that in their responses to the questionnaire, a majority of parents had indicated that they preferred single grade-level classes (FN, 1/5/83, p. 3). But, like his predecessor, Wilkens recognized the flexibility this structure gave him in a small school with fluctuating enrollment and opinionated parents. Thus, he decided that along with retaining the team-taught kindergarten, he would again schedule only two single-grade classes, leaving the remainder as combination grades (FN, 5/12/83, p. 2).

When Wilkens began his tenure at Berry Hill, staff assignments were already in place. In accordance with district regulations, the former principal had made these decisions the previous spring. But changing enrollment figures, an unplanned resignation, and the implementation of the newly established departmentalization program allowed Wilkens to make several decisions concerning staff assignments during the fall, including the hiring of two new staff members. In fact, the exact schedule of classes was not made final until two weeks after school began (FN, 9/13/82, p. 15).

Two major concerns guided Wilkens's approach to staff assignment. The first was reducing the relatively high rate of student transiency caused by parents who "shopped" for teachers. As we have indicated elsewhere, parents were quite prone to move children from school to school in search of a teacher to their liking. Wilkens's second concern was to improve staff/principal relations. This second goal was especially critical because the staff's dislike for the previous principal had proven detrimental to school morale.

Wilkens employed two strategies to achieve his first goal. Knowing that parents preferred single-grade classes over combined-grade classrooms, Wilkens attempted to increase enrollment at some grade levels so that grade-level combinations would not be necessary. For example, when the school year began, not enough students had enrolled to support two kindergarten classes; instead, one kindergarten and one combined kindergarten/first grade class had been formed. Wilkens, however, wanted two full kindergarten classes. Consequently, he sought to entice parents to enroll their children by setting up a teaching team for the kindergarten. He paired a highly regarded teacher and a colleague with whom she had team-taught previously. The strategy paid off: The school's "teacher shopping" parents were quick to take advantage of the chance to expose their children to a teaching "star," and enough new students enrolled to support two full kindergartens (TI, 9/7/82, p. 24; FN, 9/13/82, p. 14; FN, 3/30/83, p. 1).

The second aspect of Wilkens's strategy was to coordinate any necessary transfer of teachers so that strengths were accentuated and weaknesses were minimized. The hoped-for result was that parents would be less inclined to avoid teachers. To illustrate, one of Wilkens's early decisions concerned a teacher who had been "moved down" to teach kindergarten by the previous principal. This teacher believed that the former principal had made the assignment for vindictive reasons. Wilkens agreed and decided to move her from kindergarten to first grade (FN, 9/8/82, p. 11).

Several teachers who had worked with her, however, expressed doubts that she had enough patience to work with first graders and felt she might do better with slightly older children. In response to their concerns, Wilkens assigned the teacher to a combined first/second grade class, which had only a few first graders (TI, 3/4/83, p. 26). This assignment also "sandwiched" the teacher between strong teachers at the lower and higher grade levels, ensuring that, in the long run, students who had the weaker teacher would not suffer (FN, 5/12/83, p. 3). In this way, Wilkens was able to place the teacher to compensate for any weaknesses that parents might have perceived.

As he made this decision, Wilkens also worked toward achieving his second goal. By responding to the teacher's request as well as to the concerns voiced by her colleagues, Wilkens took crucial steps toward gaining teacher support. As a general rule, Wilkens involved staff in his decisions about assignments by taking their needs and preferences into account. He played only a limited role in specifying the details of the new departmentalization program, which had been designed to strengthen the upper grades in response to parent concerns. He allowed teachers to work out for themselves which subjects each taught, stipulating only that the work be evenly divided (FN, 9/8/82, pp. 18-19).

Although most teachers had been hired before Wilkens's arrival, he was called upon to fill two positions. When a teacher resigned during the summer, Wilkens hired Harold McCauley, a teacher from his previous school, whose skill in interrelationships with students, faculty, and parents would, Wilkens felt, contribute toward a more positive school climate. The principal was also prompted by a desire to provide ethnic balance to the faculty and to bring in someone he did not have to worry about. According to Wilkens, even before the school year began parents had already called to request "the new teacher" because they did not want the two other fifth/sixth grade male teachers (FN, 9/13/82, p. 15; SO, 2/25/83, p. 5).

However, Wilkens's decision to hire McCauley did not yield its desired results. Instead, this teacher's Applied Life Sciences course, which Wilkens had hoped would improve school morale, spurred community anger, increasing parental concern and divisiveness. The feeling among some teachers was that their new principal had misjudged the Berry Hill community by hiring someone who, while skilled in promoting student self-esteem, lacked proficiency in language arts and espoused a program antithetical to the cultural values of many parents (SO, 2/25/83, p. 2).

However, in May, when it became necessary to make assignments for the following year, Wilkens acted to remedy these problems. He moved the teacher of the Applied Life Sciences class from the upper circuit to kindergarten, moving the "star" teacher's partner to first grade. Through this shift, Wilkens attempted to tap McCauley's strong interpersonal and motivational skills while resolving parent concerns about his weakness in language arts instruction. The principal also planned to have McCauley help with tutoring and counseling activities in the afternoon (FN, 5/12/83, pp. 2-3).

In contrast to his decision to hire McCauley, Wilkens's selection of a first-grade teacher for a second position met with the approval of both teachers and parents. The favorable response was due to the fact that Wilkens had solicited suggestions from Berry Hill's faculty, who knew the community and were familiar with other teachers in the district. At the first faculty meeting, the principal announced that he needed a primary teacher and asked, "Who knows a good substitute?" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 11). Several teachers heartily recommended a colleague, who was resuming her career after raising a family; Wilkens then brought this teacher to Berry Hill (FN, 9/8/82, p. 14).

In making this decision and in attending to the complaints of the kindergarten teacher mentioned earlier, Wilkens evidenced his regard for his teachers' preferences. The newly hired substitute, who taught first grade for the entire year, described how the principal had kept her at Berry Hill:

> [The district administrators] were going to send somebody in to replace me, but [Wilkens] said "No," because the other first grade teacher who's had some problems is able to work with me and therefore, let's keep this happy situation going. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 9)

Toward the end of the spring semester, the principal told a representative for a group of parents that, because of reduced enrollment, it might not be possible to rehire this teacher for the following year. He encouraged the parents to petition the district office for her return. Wilkens confided to our observer that although he thought the next year's enrollment would be high enough to keep the position, he was witholding this information from the district to avoid hiring another teacher with more seniority. Thus, by delaying the need to "fill in" a position until September, he would be able to keep this teacher at Berry Hill in the fall (FN, 4/22/83, p. 12). This shrewd handling of parent concerns and manipulation of district regulations for his and his school's benefit reflected the increased knowledge and ease with which Wilkens handled staff assignments as the school year was coming to a close.

He also moved decisively to position teachers for the following year in order to strengthen the program, increase community support, and keep his teachers happy. One teacher noted Wilkens's increased involvement:

> He's changing a lot of what's going on with the [school] next year. I think he came in this year and things were set up and he went along with it. I think he's been very observant and he's changing teacher placement for this year, [and] he's going to be modifying the departmentalization. (TI, 3/9/83, p. 8)

Wilkens met individually with his teachers to ask them what they would like to do next year and which grades they would prefer teaching (FN, 4/22/83, p. 9). Then in May, he announced the new assignments (FN, 5/12/83, pp. 2-4).

His choices once again demonstrated his ability to take a number of factors into account to strengthen Berry Hill's instructional program and improve school climate. For example, Wilkens reassigned a highly regarded but isolated teacher from a self-contained, third-grade classroom to a combined fifth/sixth grade classroom. This move involved the teacher in the upper-circuit departmentalization and was a strategy to break down her solitary work style. Wilkens hoped to encourage her to share with other teachers, and to "spread her around" as a drawing card for parents (FN, 5/12/83, pp. 2-3). And in his scheduling for the coming fall, Wilkens also ensured that the two weakest teachers would again be placed between strong teachers so that parents would be less likely to move their children to other schools. The class assignments were made in such a way that these teachers did not receive clusters of gifted students (FN, 5/12/83, p. 3).

When making student assignments to individual classrooms, Wilkens paid close attention to parent demands and teacher preferences. Over the course of the year, he adopted the following procedure: First, he drafted a tentative list of assignments, taking into account student/teacher matches and class balance in terms of sex and ability; he then submitted the list to teachers individually for suggestions and approval. During this time, he and the SIP coordinator met frequently to discuss CTBS scores and look at student ability in relation to grouping arrangements (FN, 6/14/83, p. 2). Finally, he discussed placements with each teacher, negotiated the exchange of students, and incorporated parent requests where possible (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I).

The amount of input Wilkens allowed staff members in making classroom assignments was considerable. For example, at a meeting of upper-circuit teachers, he asked two staff members for their opinion about several children who, despite poor performances on the CTBS test, might still be candidates for the GATE class (FN, 6/14/83, pp. 2-3). In this case, the teachers' opinions were given more weight than test scores. The principal was, however, keenly aware that he would be on the firing line if parents questioned the wisdom of his choices. Accordingly, at the year's first faculty meeting, Wilkens told teachers to use care as they made their final placements for the school year, because he would have to justify their decisions to parents (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19).

Wilkens was quite willing to take the heat for his staff members. He saw his role as that of providing support for staff decisions and buffering teachers from parents and the district office. As he told a district official, "[I keep] my teachers in the background so they don't feel the pressure" (FN, 9/28/82, p. 15).

An incident early in the year illustrated the kind of tension and pressure that student assignments could generate. A few days after school had started, it became clear that seven or eight students would have to be transferred from an overcrowded third-grade class taught by one of the school's best teachers to a combined second/third grade class taught by a teacher who was not as highly regarded by parents. The teacher of the combined class did not wish to receive the other teacher's poorest students, and the two reached what seemed to be an amicable decision to transfer eight children who were performing at grade level.

Although both staff members had agreed about which children should be transferred, the single-grade teacher soon changed her mind and substituted another student for one of those agreed upon. The teacher of the combined classroom protested because the substitute choice reportedly had "socialization problems" (FN, 9/28/82, p. 13). This teacher later discussed with Wilkens her reluctance to accept the student. She maintained that the former principal had played favorites in assigning gifted students to her colleague. She also said that she did not want her class to be used as a "dumping ground" for poorer students.

Wilkens took a conciliatory tack in handling this dispute. He responded to the teacher's complaints with patient, sympathetic questions, acknowledging her point of view but encouraging her to see the other teacher's side. He also agreed to provide any extra help needed to teach the split class (FN, 9/28/82, p. 16).

Despite the fact that the problem student was transferred to the combined class, the teacher later expressed her appreciation for the principal's supportiveness in handling the transfer:

> I think Louis had a big part in that he made sure that the group he moved into my room wasn't necessarily a low group or the high group. . . . [I] got a very average group which I really respect him for. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 8)

As he worked out the problems with his teachers, Wilkens knew that another controversy was imminent. Some of the parents whose children were being transferred believed that they had an unwritten understanding with the former principal about the placement of their children. In anticipation, Wilkens took several precautions. He sent notes home with the transferred students explaining that the transfer was not a demotion. He called the district office to warn them to expect complaints from dissatisfied parents. And at a meeting of district principals, he took the opportunity to ask the assistant superintendent to make a statement regarding class transfers (FN, 9/28/82, pp. 2, 16).

Wilkens's reading of Berry Hill's parents proved accurate: They protested vociferously, and one complained directly to the assistant superintendent of elementary education (FN, 9/28/82, p. 13). When this administrator telephoned Wilkens, the principal explained that the parent claimed to have been promised the "superstar" teacher by the former principal, who had solicited enrollment by striking bargains without informing staff members. Wilkens also told the assistant superintendent that the boy had experienced problems in his former school that would not be resolved by placing him in a highly demanding class at Berry Hill.

Before a scheduled meeting with the parent, the associate superintendent again contacted Wilkens to ask for suggestions or recommendations. Wilkens responded that the combination class would be less stressful for the boy than the third-grade class and assured her that the boy's new teacher would monitor the child's situation. Wilkens's low-key but firm intervention proved successful--later that day, the parent called Wilkens to say that he had "tried to storm the Bastille and lost" (FN, 10/4/82, p. 7).

The parents of four other students held conferences directly with Wilkens to protest the transfer. One couple, attempting perhaps to force the principal's hand, said they wanted to transfer their son to another school; Wilkens called their bluff and willingly negotiated the transfer himself on the spot by phoning the principal of the other school. He warned the parents, however, that for their son's good, they should consider this decision a permanent move (FN, 9/28/82, p. 3).

Wilkens's firmness indicated that although he took parent preferences into account whenever possible (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I), he knew from the start that bowing to parent pressure would cause more problems than it would solve. Aware that Berry Hill's parents "shopped around" for teachers, he said:

> I'm not open to blackmail. You can't play me off against someone else, because you're the loser then. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 19)

In support of Wilkens's action a staff member, after hinting that the previous principal had buckled under community pressure, commended Wilkens's firm stand with parents who threatened transfers to get the classroom assignments they wanted:

> Parents have gone to him [Wilkens] about classroom student placements. He just put his foot down and said, "This is the way it's gonna be. I'm sorry, but this is the way it is." And I think in some ways parents and teachers can at least repect that. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 5)

The volatile nature of the Berry Hill community, however, forced Wilkens to walk a thin line between supporting his own and his teachers' preferences and accommodating the preferences of Berry Hill's community. He thus had to concede some points to parents. For example, the principal believed that "tracking" students contributed to the development of cliques, and he preferred dispersing students so that no one class would have predominately high- or low-achieving students (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I). The parents of high-achieving students, however, wanted their students "tracked," in part, to avoid some of the weaker teachers. As a result, Wilkens organized the classrooms for the following year so that GATE students were clustered in six classrooms rather than dispersed. This arrangement also ensured that the two weakest teachers would not receive GATE students (FN, 5/12/83, p. 2).

The district established formal standards for student evaluation and promotion at Berry Hill, paying particular attention to student performance on the CTBS. A score of 50% or better in all subjects was the target set by the central office for all its schools--a target which most students at Berry Hill easily hit. In fact, only five of Berry Hill's sixth graders had failed to reach the minimum level on the spring test (FN, 9/13/82, p. 11). Nonetheless, the school district had supplied Berry Hill with a testing expert to assist teachers in planning and preparing for the tests (TI, 2/26/83, p. 21).

To a great extent, Principal Wilkens followed the district's lead in emphasizing test scores. Before the school year began, he carefully examined the CTBS scores from the previous spring, saying, "I have to know what's being tested and make sure our curriculum is at least meeting the needs of what the kids are going to be tested on," since he had been told by the superintendent that "testing was the most important thing" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 36; FN, 9/13/82, p. 11). Then he announced at the year's first staff meeting: "Our leader says, 'Test [in order to] achieve'" (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19).

However, Wilkens may have seen his situation at Berry Hill as somewhat of a luxury. After looking over student CTBS scores, Wilkens remarked enthusiastically to our observer, "They are so high. This is going from the ridiculous to the ridiculous--

ridiculously low [at my former schools] to ridiculously high" (FN, 9/13/82, p. 11). He did, however, express misgivings about the effectiveness of the Berry Hill curriculum as a whole, and he introduced the BASIS kit which, as described in the section on "The Content of Instruction," contained materials designed to prepare children for the CTBS tests.

Teachers, on the whole, seemed relaxed about student performance on standardized tests. We did, however, observe one of the upper-circuit teachers administering a test from the BASIS kit (FN, 3/9/83, p. 2). And another expressed an awareness of the community's perception of student scores. This veteran teacher confided to our observer that he was concerned that Wilkens's decision to suspend departmentalization for the month of April would have an adverse affect on his students' CTBS math scores, because he would not be meeting with some of the students prior to the spring testing. "You know, they publish those scores in the [local newspaper] and we're responsible, do you see what I mean?" he said (SO, 4/27/83, p. 3).

Scores on the CTBS exam were not the school's only measure of student achievement. Report cards were issued quarterly to all students. Students received one of five ratings: E for Excellent; G for Good; S for Satisfactory; N for Needs Improvement; and U for Unsatisfactory (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 5). Teachers used a variety of means to determine these grades. Some based their grades on student performance in the classroom, including results of tests from math and reading textbooks (TI, 2/26/83, p. 23; TI, 4/28/83, p. 8). Others included more subjective gauges of student progress. For example, when asked what kinds of things she looked for in her children to determine if her program was successful, one teacher answered, "You see kids all excited" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 4). Another teacher said, "You see that a child is not sent to the office as often, or you see somebody being considerate to another student in the room. Or somebody says, 'I set my goal and I did it'" (TI, 2/25/83, p. 8). The first/second grade teacher said, "I look for responses in the children. I look for steadiness in their handwriting" (TI, 4/28/83, p. 3). A kindergarten teacher preferred to observe the "children's growth patterns" rather than rely on testing to see that her students were learning good study habits and acquiring skills in listening and following directions (TI, 4/18/83, p. 2).

In the eyes of some faculty, this wealth of criteria also created problems. One teacher was especially concerned about social promotions. He felt that "teachers did no favors in letting kids pass if they tried hard and acted nice" (FN, 1/12/83, p. 13). Another teacher went as far as to question privately the validity of certain grades issued by a colleague, whose standards, he felt, were not in agreement with those of the majority (SO, 4/27/83, p. 3).

Wilkens preferred to leave the task of defining standards for grading to teachers. He encouraged his staff to get together as a group and see how each other graded. But the principal himself did not officially inspect report cards. He explained:

> If I did, I would be responsible. The grade is the teacher's responsibility and I don't believe it is my position to explain grades in a teacher/parent situation. I support the teacher. (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I)

His teachers, however, believed that Wilkens kept abreast of student progress through several means. They said that Wilkens looked at student scores and grades and at the teacher reports that went into the parent-produced newsletter (TI, 3/10/83, p. 12; TI, 4/20/83, p. 6). And some teachers went out of their way to keep Wilkens apprised of student progress by sharing student work with him (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13; TI, 3/10/83, p. 12; TI, 4/28/83, p. 7). For example, one teacher said, "If there's some big breakthrough with a child, I'll take the paper down [to the office]" (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13). Another teacher believed that through discussions about reassignments and retentions, the principal knew who her top and bottom students were (TI, 2/26/83, p. 23). Finally, a staff member said, "I'm not sure if he really knows how each student is doing," but added, "I'm sure he'll find out when they take the CTBS tests and the score sheets come out" (TI, 4/14/83, p. 7).

Decisions regarding student promotion and retention were based on standardized test scores (particularly the CTBS), teacher recommendation, and student maturity; students were expected to be performing at grade level before they could be promoted (FN, 9/8/82, p. 19; IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). The principal played an active role when retentions had been recommended. During the fall semester, Wilkens contacted several parents whose children had been retained in the fifth grade. Because all upper-grade classrooms contained both fifth and sixth graders, the parents of these students were confused about their children's status. Wilkens told them that although the students' math scores on the CTBS exceeded national norms, they were considered low for Berry Hill. More importantly, however, the students had done very poorly in reading, scoring at the tenth and twentieth percentiles. Wilkens then met with these students to explain their status and to let them know they should contact him if they needed any special help (FN, 9/13/82, pp. 9-11).

The retention process for the following school year began in January. At that time, parents of students who might be retained were notified at conferences (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). According to Wilkens, most of these retentions were in the first and second grades and and sometimes resulted from parent requests (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II).

Pedagogy: Lortie (1975) wrote about the ideals of teachers:

> Teachers favor outcomes for students which are not arcane. Their purposes, in fact, seem to

> be relatively traditional; they want to produce "good" people--students who like learning--and they hope they will attain such goals with all their students. . . .
>
> We find that the goals sought by teachers cannot be routinely realized. Their ideals are difficult and demanding: exerting moral influence, "soldering" students to learning, and achieving general impact presume great capacity to penetrate and alter the consciousness of students. (pp. 132-133)

In his words, we glimpse the essence of teaching, the ideals to which men and women of that profession largely aspire. Lortie's statement also confronts us with the fact that teachers' goals for students are difficult to achieve. In this light, those things which teachers do in their classrooms, the activities or tasks they lead and in which they involve students become critically important.

The variety of strategies and materials utilized by teachers is remarkably small given the diversity of students and contexts in which they work. Further, we can gather from historical chronicles and archival representations that the delivery of instruction has changed little over the centuries. Despite the aspirations of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and radical educators (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936; Neill, 1960; Skinner, 1948; Smith & Keith, 1971) and the advent of a variety of audiovisual technologies, a preponderance of whole-group, teacher-directed instruction remains.

The range of pedagogic diversity that does commonly occur in schools was captured by Bossert (1979) in only three categories:

> Recitation--An activity that involves the whole class or a large group of children in a single task: The children listen to the question the teacher asks, raise their hands, wait to be recognized, and give an answer . . . the teacher usually controls the flow of questions and answers.
>
> Class Task--Worksheets, tests, math assignments, or other tasks assigned to the entire class.
>
> Multitask--Usually includes tasks like independent reading, small group and independent projects, artwork, and crafts. These activities involve the greatest amount of pupil choice in organizing and completing the work. (pp. 44-45)

The choice of instructional strategy seems to depend on many factors. Attempting to model classroom teaching, Dunkin and Biddle (1974) noted that the instructional approach selected by teachers is influenced by their formative and training experiences and by their own psychological "properties" (p. 40). In addition, as in our own conception (see Figure 1, p. v), they noted the importance of context variables such as community, school size, student ethnic composition, etc. on classroom practice. (For further examples, see Dwyer, Smith, Prunty & Kleine, in press, a case study of contextual impact on an educational innovation.) Finally, Dunkin and Biddle have underscored the importance of the students--important partners in any instructional task:

> Most systems for studying teaching have concentrated on teacher behavior, assuming, reasonably, that much of the success of teaching is in the teacher's hands. . . . Are these presumptions adequate? Surely teachers not only induce but also react to pupil behavior. . . . In some ways, therefore, teacher behavior is also a function of pupil behavior, and the success of the teaching enterprise rests with pupils as well as with teachers. (p. 44)

The purpose of our study, of course, is to look beyond the teacher and his or her students and examine the role of the principal in the leadership and management of instruction. This section typifies the pedagogy employed at Berry Hill Elementary School and seeks to explain the instructional patterns that we found by relating them to student, teacher, principal, and other contextual factors.

No official policy prescribed teaching techniques for Berry Hill's teachers, and Principal Wilkens was content to leave determination of instructional strategies to individual staff members (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). "I don't tell you how to teach," he announced at the first faculty meeting. However, his hands-off policy did not mean that he lacked interest in what went on in classrooms. He had another goal, as he indicated by following up his announcement with the following:

> You want to show movies--if it's a good one--invite me down, share it with other classes. (FN, 9/8/82, p. 10)

Wilkens sought to create an atmosphere of support and sharing, which would expose teachers to new materials and techniques and which would encourage them to attempt new projects. In the words of one staff member:

> He doesn't come at you like a dictator. He trusts the teacher, and he trusts that the

> teachers will know what children need. (TI, 4/20/83, p. 4)

Yet, despite having the flexibility to employ various techniques, teachers at Berry Hill tended to employ the traditional methods of whole-group, teacher-directed instruction. They determined content and pacing, and communicated subject matter through lecture, recitation, and seatwork. One teacher, for example, lauded the efficacy of repetition, saying, "[It] is the easiest way to learn, and it's the most effective" (TI, 2/25/83, p. 2). The "traditional" view was, perhaps, best expounded by one of the upper-circuit staff members:

> I feel that my approach is real traditional. I like a quiet classroom except when we have activities, such as [when] they're working on a project together. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 3)

This teacher was also uncomfortable with the departmentalization of the upper grades, which necessitated a great deal of student movement from class to class (TI, 4/14/83, p. 3).

Some teachers did, however, try to vary the lecture format of their presentations. For example, in order to teach math, one staff member stressed conceptual frameworks before dealing with individual problems. He explained that first he gave students "an understanding, a grasp, of the concept of what is meant by a fraction. Then you break it down" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 2). Another illustrated the practical applications of mathematics by teaching a unit on the stock market (TI, 3/9/83, p. 14).

Other staff members used approaches that were more flamboyant. An upper-grade teacher performed various "little antics" while lecturing to help students remember lessons. He said:

> You hope . . . they'll remember you prancing around with the cups . . . and the whole business will stick somehow. (FN, 3/9/83, p. 6)

Two teachers who worked together staged an argument in front of their children and held a discussion afterwards to show students how silly their own arguments looked, to talk about remembering details, and to illustrate how different people remember things differently (SO, 4/19/83, p. 3).

Some teachers attempted to personalize their teaching in order to draw students into the learning process. These staff members made efforts to present themselves as people as well as teachers. One teacher elaborated:

> I think by sharing a lot of yourself, [you get] children to work better for you. (TI, 4/18/83, p. 3)

One of her colleagues agreed, saying:

> I put a lot of importance on my relationship with the children, my being natural with them, and my being aware of myself so that I bring out the best in them. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 4)

In both cases, teachers tried to deemphasize the formal nature of interactions by creating a personal relationship with their students.

As a method to reinforce language skills, a teacher in the lower circuit paid close attention to her speech, providing a proper example for her students even as she taught other subjects. She explained:

> I try to be very aware with the children in terms of how I speak, because I feel that they need models. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 2)

Some staff members coupled these strategies of modeling and acting out lectures with exercises that encouraged students to think critically, to experiment, and to ask questions. For example, one of the kindergarten teachers said:

> The ideal way to teach is that you don't stand and you don't tell the kids everything. . . . You're there to guide the children in learning. And so, the ideal way is to present situations, to present objects, to present experiments, present situations where children will ask questions, be inquisitive. (TI, 4/20/83, p. 1)

Another expressed a similar idea:

> Let them discover, maybe not my definitions, but their own definitions. They have to learn to test their hypotheses. (FN, 3/9/83, p. 7)

These statements and examples indicate that though direct instruction predominated among the teaching strategies employed at Berry Hill, there was a great deal of variety in the styles of the teaching staff.

Similarly, teachers often added spice to student work by emphasizing creativity. One said she tried to "make [lessons] interesting to the children" by using such techniques as creative drama, songs, and finger plays (TI, 4/18/83, p. 2). A writing teacher encouraged students to "brainstorm" before they began writing exercises, and she had the children write metaphors (FN, 5/19/83, p. 1). Another teacher had students paint relief maps illustrating a fantasy story which they had read (FN, 2/16/83, p. 5). Students in another class composed poems and stories (FN, 2/16/83, p. 4). And other students built dioramas illustrating the lives of famous people (FN, 3/24/83, p. 6). And as we saw in the section on social curriculum, extracurricular activities like the Living with Nature project and the puppet show were calculated by teachers to involve students actively in the learning process (SO, 4/19/83, p. 2; FN, 6/2/83, pp. 1-5).

When asked to account for their preferred teaching strategies, few staff members mentioned Principal Wilkens as an influence (TI, 4/13/83, p. 7). Several cited the school's SIP coordinator as an instructional leader (TI, 2/26/83, p. 16; TI, 3/9/83, p. 15; TI, 3/10/83, p. 17; TI, 4/20/83, p. 8), and several mentioned that teachers shared ideas among themselves (TI, 3/9/83, p. 2; TI, 3/10/83, p. 17; TI, 4/20/83, p. 8; TI, 4/28/83, p. 8). The writing teacher who used the brainstorming technique said that she had gotten the idea from a university workshop she had attended (FN, 5/19/83, p. 1).

Yet, over and over again, staff members did credit Wilkens with providing the proper atmosphere for those teachers who desired to attempt new things (TI, 2/26/83, p. 17; TI, 3/9/83, p. 8; TI, 4/14/83, p. 3). One teacher asserted that "one influence is that I know I have the okay to do the things that I think are the best for the children" (TI, 4/20/83, p. 4). In similar fashion, the teacher who organized the Living with Nature project claimed that she "wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for him [Wilkens]." And the teacher who taught his students about the stock market said that the "harmonious feeling[s]" generated by the principal had made him more willing to be experimental (TI, 3/10/83, p. 9). Perhaps one staff member best summed up Wilkens's approach to teaching techniques in the following way:

> He [Wilkens] has no criticism. He has positive things to say. . . . The principal will say this is what I want, but it's okay how you do it. I will accept it in this form or that form or whatever form it is as long as you have what I'm asking you to do. He gives people that flexibility to be themselves.
> (TI, 2/25/83, p. 19)

Both the principal and the district were quite straightforward in establishing guidelines dictating how much homework teachers should assign and when assignments should be made. District policy stated that children in lower grades be assigned a total of 20 minutes of homework per night and that children in upper grades have 20 minutes for each subject per night. Wilkens had established that "homework days" were Monday through Thursday (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). He also indicated that these guidelines had been passed on to parents (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). At the year's first faculty meeting, he told teachers to be consistent about assignments so that parents would know what to expect (FN, 9/8/82, p. 14). However, individual teachers decided on their own whether to adhere to these guidelines.

The main problem mentioned by teachers in regard to homework was poor student attitude. Upon occasion, staff members complained that student work was sloppy and ill-prepared (SO, 11/29/82, p. 1; FN, 1/12/83, p. 12). They also said that students tended to whine when teachers made assignments. Complicating the matter, according to one teacher, was the fact that parents did not back up teachers who tried to induce students to improve, making teachers reluctant to pursue homework problems (FN, 3/22/83, p. 4). As a strategy to combat the parental lack of interest, one teacher said that she purposely designed assignments which required that children be assisted by their parents (FN, 2/16/83, p. 4).

Although Wilkens felt that effective use of within-class grouping could improve instruction in some areas, he was inclined to leave grouping decisions to individual teachers, summarizing his policy simply as "whatever works best" (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). He did, however, institute the staggered schedule for the primary grades in order to facilitate grouping students for instruction in reading. Because each class had four reading groups, the staggered schedule allowed teachers to work with no more than two groups at a time. Wilkens believed that two groups was the maximum any teacher could effectively handle. Some 10 to 20 students did not fit into the four groups and were sent to another classroom during reading periods, a practice that Wilkens encouraged (FN, 2/19/83, p. 4; IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). Placement in reading groups was based on test scores and teacher judgment (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II).

Wilkens also supported grouping by demonstrating new methods to teachers. One teacher said:

> I told him [Wilkens] I was having some problems with grouping and he said that there was some approach that he knew of and he'd come in my room and work with me on working with the kids. And I'll be darned, he did. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 11)

In other subjects, lower-grade teachers varied more in their use of grouping. One first and second-grade teacher ran an individualized math program with pre- and post-tests (SO, 4/28/83, p. 2). Another used fifth- and sixth-grade peer tutors and adult aides and parents to help teach her first graders math in small groups of two to three students (TI, 2/26/83, p. 1).

The upper grades, as discussed in the section on "Structures and Placement," were cross-class grouped based on math proficiency; these groupings were used for both math and language arts, theoretically eliminating the need for within-class grouping. However, some within-class grouping did occur as well within this structure (FN, 3/9/83, p. 4; FN, 3/24/83, p. 1).

For the following year, Wilkens's plans were to use ability-grouping in other subject areas and to cluster GATE students in certain classrooms. These plans may have had some effects on within-class grouping in the succeeding school year.

Staff Development: Nothing seemed as important to the dozens of principals with whom we spoke in this study than the quality of their teachers. Again and again, we were told that teachers make the difference in the quality of schools. The hiring and retention of teachers as well as the development of their instructional expertise, then, seems critical in the establishment of an effective instructional system in any school.

Illuminating the same point, Shulman (1984) focused on teachers in a statement about effective schools that he termed "outrageous":

> I would like to suggest another image for you to carry around in your heads of what an effective school is like--an image that goes beyond the empirical view of a school that produces gains in test scores . . . . I'd like to suggest a view of an effective school that you will treat as outrageous. I think we ought to define effective schools as those that are educative settings for teachers. (Address)

He justified his proposal as follows:

> If the quality of education for kids ultimately depends on how smart teachers are about their teaching and about their subjects, what better place for them to learn new things than in the school itself?

Noting our principals' beliefs about the importance of teachers and finding no argument with Shulman's logic, we consider the topic of staff development a crucial part of the technology of instructional systems (Showers, 1984).

In conceptualizing staff development as growth or as learning experiences for teachers, three common aspects of the day-to-day world of schools seem germane: a) the supervision of instruction; b) teacher evaluation; and c) in-service opportunities for staff. We have already woven the topic of supervision in this school into other portions of the story. For example, through supervision, we find our principals influencing social and academic goals, social and academic curriculum, and pedagogy. In this section, then, we would like to illuminate the principal's activities and attitudes regarding teacher evaluation and discuss his role in providing in-service activities for teachers.

Before describing teacher evaluation at Berry Hill, we would like to clarify the difference between instructional supervision and teacher evaluation, for the two are often confused. McLaughlin (1984) distinguished between the two:

> Supervision of teaching and evaluation of teaching are not the same thing. Instructional supervision is the process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher by giving the teacher feedback about classroom interactions and helping the teacher to make use of that feedback to become a more effective teacher. Evaluation is the analysis of overall teaching performance to meet contractual requirements, including the measurement of teacher change and improvement both in teaching and professional conduct to make personnel decisions for job placement, tenure, performance improvement plans, dismissal, and recognition and promotion.
>
> The power to supervise is bestowed by teachers and is intended to create trust between the teacher and supervisor, to facilitate teacher learning and develop teacher autonomy. The power to evaluate is bestowed by the governing board, administration, and state regulations. (p. 4)

Whether he proceeded by formal or informal means, Principal Wilkens communicated to his teachers the assurance that staff evaluations were nothing to worry about. At a staff meeting early in the year, he made clear the perfunctory nature of his observations:

> When I come in to observe, I'll tell you ahead [of time] what I'm looking for or you tell me what you want me to look for. . . . What I tell you is what the district looks at. (FN, 9/8/82, p. 13)

And in his conversations with individual staff members, he underlined this message, telling one teacher that he collected lesson plans only to "put them in a file and have them on hand when the superintendent comes" (TI, 2/26/83, p. 15). In fact, we observed no instances during the year in which Wilkens's evaluations led to major decisions in regard to staffing, although his knowledge of teachers contributed to his decisions about specific staff assignments, as discussed previously.

As regards formal evaluative procedures, Wilkens scheduled three formal classroom observations (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). He also held two formal conferences with each staff member. For the first observation, held in October, Wilkens told teachers to expect his visit within a two-week block of time; during these visits, he checked teachers' cumulative folders to make sure they had received all the necessary information, and he also checked attendance cards, lesson plan books, seating charts, and class schedules to make sure that they were available for substitutes.

The second observation, which took place in January and was scheduled at the teachers' convenience, also involved another check of lesson plans. The final, end-of-the-year observation, was a time for taking note of the state of the room and textbooks. At one point, the principal did say that he planned to schedule further formal observations for teachers who had particular problems in order to help them improve; however, there were no reports of his doing so during the year of this study.

Some staff members expressed disappointment at Wilkens's almost token efforts toward formal classroom observations. According to one teacher:

> He [Wilkens] just fills in the form that he was there for such and such a time and whatever. Well, I think if you're going to visit and whatever, I like to have follow-through afterwards just to know what his impression was. But there isn't any feedback yet or I haven't had any yet. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 13)

Another said:

> He doesn't really visit and really observe. I haven't seen any real observance. . . . I go and make him aware [of how my kids are performing]. I don't think he's ever asked me. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 7)

Similarly, some teachers were less than pleased with their principal's seeming lack of interest in the lesson plans which they were required to submit. When stating what they thought Wilkens did with lesson plans, none believed that he actually used them for evaluation. "I think he files them," said one (TI, 4/14/83, p. 6). "[They probably get] put in the drawer," said another (TI, 4/13/83, p. 8). And one teacher reacted quite coolly to Wilkens's candor about the pro forma nature of his collecting lesson plans. She said, "Now I would have felt much better about it if he had said, 'I really enjoy going over these lesson plans'" (TI, 2/26/83, p. 15). Others simply did not bother with, or were vary lax about, turning them in (TI, 4/14/83, p. 9). Said one:

> I was turning them in for a while. . . . At times they're very complete, at times they're not--it depends. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 4)

Wilkens acknowledged looking at lesson plans only "rarely"; he checked them briefly at the beginning of the year for consistency, then filed them to have on hand for district visitors. He also knew that some teachers forgot to turn in the plans but said that when he went to their classes, he checked that they had something written down. "Most of them do something, just some are more formal than others," he commented (IOI, 3/24/83, Part I).

Both Wilkens and his staff agreed that the principal's main tool for evaluation was the drop-in visit (TI, 3/9/83, p. 13; TI, 4/18/83, p. 11). Wilkens saw these visits as proactive, a way to "catch the problems before they get to the office." According to Wilkens:

> [I like to] sit in the classrooms and listen, watch. You have to be there if you want to know what is going on. (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II).

Thus, one of his everyday activities was to make casual, drop-in classroom visits to watch teachers in action.

Several staff members used Wilkens's visits as occasions to talk to the principal about their teaching. One teacher said, "About every third week, he actually comes and spends some time. But he peeks in more than that" (TI, 2/26/83, p. 19). Another commented:

> He visits often--most of it is spontaneous. He just stops in and then we will explain what just happened, like you dropped in on this lesson or that lesson. (TI, 4/20/83, p. 6)

Although teachers knew Wilkens' drop-in visits were potentially evaluative in nature, they expressed no apprehension about them. One teacher attributed this to Wilkens's informal, nonjudgmental approach:

> He's so casual, he'll come into the room, you won't even know he's there. But he'll be there. He sees. He knows what's going on. I suppose this carries over to Louis' approach. Louis doesn't have to sit down with paper and pencil, sit in a chair and say, "Okay, you're being watched now, and I'm observing you." (TI, 3/10/83, p. 11)

Interestingly, other teachers perceived Wilkens's low-key monitoring style as an expression of his confidence in their ability. One expressed her appreciation for Wilkens's "I trust you" attitude, saying:

> I like [Wilkens] because he's more or less laissez-faire. He gets off of my back. He trusts that the teachers know what they're doing and I like that in him very much. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 5)

Another lauded the principal for his patience in allowing teachers to improve on their own. She said:

> He can come in [the classroom], and it can be wonderful. And he can come in, and it can be awful. It doesn't make [me] feel horrible because he knows what's happening in there, and he does see some good products. . . . [And when] it's a behavior situation . . . I mean [when] I know it was terrible and he knows I know it was terrible, he [also] knows that I'm trying to do something about it. (TI, 3/9/83, p. 11)

Teachers also said that they did get back some specific suggestions for change and improvement as well as a sense of how they were doing. Said one, the principal "gives [teachers] a lot of positive reinforcement," adding that suggestions for improvement were generally made "with all of us in meetings, so it's not [like] you're singled out" (TI, 4/18/83, p. 12). Another concurred, saying:

> In terms of personality and supportiveness and stimulation, cheering you on, Mr. Wilkens does a very good [job] about that. He really does. He pats you on the back and says it's coming along and whatever and that aspect of it I really enjoy. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 5)

Another teacher said that when he had approached Wilkens for comments about his teaching, the principal responded, "No, I've been in there and I know what you do and it's fine" (TI, 2/25/83, p. 20).

In fact, although there were occasional criticisms of Wilkens's methods of evaluation, most teachers felt that the principal kept himself apprised of the performance of his teachers. Even a staff member who complained of a lack of feedback from the principal admitted that Wilkens had kept tabs on her. She said:

> I think he knows more than I give him credit for. I'm not sure how much he knows, but he has said some very nice things to people about me and the kids. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 6)

Like teacher evaluation, the school's in-service activities reflected Wilkens's nonauthoritarian style of management. Little (1982) commented on the importance of in-service for successful schools:

> In . . . successful schools, teachers and administrators [are] more likely to talk together regularly and frequently about the business of instruction . . . , more likely to work together to develop lessons, assignments

> and materials, and more likely to teach one another about new ideas or practices; this habit of shared work on teaching (a norm of collegiality) stands in contrast to the carefully preserved autonomy that prevail[s] in less successful schools. (p. 40)

Little's words emphasized the value of having school staff members share work on and about teaching under a "norm of collegiality." In this way, teachers learn from each other; ideas acquired through participation in in-service training activities are brought back to colleagues, shared in discussions, and processed for useful incorporation into classroom practice. Facilitating such exchanges of ideas for the improvement of instruction is a key role of the principal. The unique position of the principal in the school organization that permits him or her to facilitate and support the exchange of ideas for the improvement of instruction is a persistent theme in the literature (e.g., Rosenblum & Jastrzab, n.d.; Showers, 1984).

The limited in-service training implemented by Wilkens during the school year addressed two of his chief concerns about Berry Hill--the lack of a coordinated curriculum and the lack of a schoolwide discipline policy. In general, however, Wilkens was not inclined to prescribe in-service training for his teachers, preferring a more subtle method of effecting change. He described his indirect style as "pulling"--providing suggestions and opportunities rather than issuing mandates. His hope was to encourage teachers to "want to change" because such change was more likely to be effective and lasting (SO, 11/29/82, p. 3).

As discussed in "The Content of Instruction," Wilkens believed that Berry Hill's teachers adhered too closely to textbooks when structuring their curriculum. In an effort to remedy this problem, Wilkens invited two textbook companies to make in-service presentations about how to use materials creatively and adapt them to individual situations (FN, 2/16/83, p. 3; IOI, 3/24/83, Part I). A teacher commented that one of these presentations had taught him new facts about reading instruction and had made him more aware of the variety of materials that were available (SO, 3/31/83, p. 1).

Wilkens also attempted to get teachers to coordinate curriculum across grade levels. He scheduled a language arts in-service--a series of three meetings aimed at establishing a written set of standards upon which all ten teachers could agree. At the first meeting, Wilkens announced:

> What I want to develop . . . is the criteria for language arts, what we expect for our children. (FN, 1/5/83, p. 6)

He went on to say that if parents complained about curriculum, he could then point to a written set of standards for student mastery; if parents did not like his school, they could go elsewhere (FN, 1/5/83, pp. 5-6). He passed out the district guide, the district task cards, and a curriculum guide from another district and asked teachers to look them over and come up with mutually agreed-upon expectations for students (FN, 1/5/83, p. 9).

For the second session, the principal and the SIP coordinator facilitated the lower- and upper-circuit meetings, respectively. Teachers in each circuit discussed changes in the district grade-level expectations as applied to Berry Hill, as well as general issues about the language arts program. At the third and final meeting, Wilkens played a more active role. He asked staff to summarize conclusions from their meetings, led a discussion to coordinate handwriting across the curriculum, and told teachers to fill in the task cards for the district objectives (FN, 1/19/83, pp. 6-12).

The meetings did push the staff to establish schoolwide grade-level expectations in language arts. The meetings also increased teacher awareness of new materials and new teaching strategies. For example, during the last session the staff discussed the need for a new spelling series that incorporated proofreading and handwriting. Wilkens said he would look for a series to pilot. In addition, Wilkens placed a pile of catalogues and brochures in the center of the lunchroom table and informed teachers that they had $8,000 to spend. He asked them to look through this material and compile a "wish list" of items that they would like to have for their language arts program. One teacher used this opportunity to order books on puppetry for a puppet show she was planning (SO, 4/14/83, p. 2). Following the in-service, a poster-size list of the requests and suggested teaching strategies was prepared by the SIP coordinator and displayed in the lunchroom; our observer noted that the list frequently sparked discussions between teachers as they ate lunch (FN, 5/12/83, pp. 9-13). One teacher provided the most positive assessment of the sessions, saying that they were "good for ideas and sharing" (SFI, 4/18/83, p. 1).

But the amount of change satisfied neither the principal nor most of his teachers. Wilkens continued to suggest that teachers learn more about diversifying their curriculum, and he even went as far as to sign up several teachers for a summer workshop on instructional enrichment; however, he made it clear that the teachers' attendance was not mandatory (TI, 3/9/83, p. 12). And as discussed previously, he also worked on an expanded language arts curriculum for GATE students.

Staff members expressed their dissatisfaction in more negative terms. One teacher, for example, called the in-service a "disappointment," saying:

> I think we could have done more with the language arts in-service than we did. I would have liked it to have gone that extra step in

> how are we doing this, not just are we or aren't we. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 28)

She suggested that the principal could allot times for the staff to meet in small groups and perhaps give them topics for discussions (TI, 2/26/83, p. 10). Another thought that the language arts meetings did not qualify as in-service, which she defined as a workshop or presentation in which you learned something useful to take back to class. However, she acknowledged that the meetings had given her a chance to lobby for a schoolwide in-service for next fall (SO, 4/14/83, p. 2). Another teacher said he considered the sessions as simply "discussions," which lacked follow-through (SFI, 4/27/83, p. 1).

In fact, the new grade-level standards established during the sessions were only minor modifications of the district objectives. And a squabble about student paper headings seemed to diminish any sense of cohesiveness created by the meetings. The argument arose when a teacher, who had already established her own format for papers, protested the group's decision. The harshness of her protest offended some of her colleagues, who considered filing a grievance against this teacher. Several complained about her behavior to the principal, who had been holding a parent conference during the argument and did not witness the teacher's outburst. Wilkens responded by issuing a bulletin which set the paper heading policy (FN, 1/5/83, pp. 9-13). Later, the recalcitrant teacher wrote a letter of apology to the principal and the other teachers, admitting that she had acted out of hand, but also saying that, only last year, teachers had been complaining that rules had been too rigid and that they were much happier with fewer restrictions.

The final major in-service scheduled that year by the principal addressed staff complaints about an increase in student behavior problems. Wilkens held several meetings to present an abbreviated course of disciplinary methods, particularly assertive discipline techniques, with the intent of formulating a consistent policy among teachers. Although such a consensus was not reached by the conclusion of the training sessions, Wilkens felt that some progress had been made toward a solution (IOI, 3/24/83, Part II). One teacher agreed with the principal, but felt that it was important to take another step. He said:

> Some things were very useful but they're not going to be useful unless the whole school adopts it and uses it consistently down the line. (TI, 4/13/83, p. 8)

As indicated earlier, however, formal in-service was not Wilkens's preferred method of improving teaching strategies. Much more characteristic of the principal was his strategy of "pulling." He suggested changes or alternatives, complimented teachers on what they did well, provided them with suggestions, and supported teacher-initiated ideas. Wilkens described an example of his use of this strategy:

> Let's say I get something that says there will be a meeting downtown to learn a new math thing. I'll go and I'll say, "Gee whiz, Larry, I know you're good in math. Would you be interested in going down to the math thing?" And he may say yes. Okay, then the next thing I do to him is to send him a copy of that letter and then say, "This is what we've talked about. This is the information." So that's what I mean about pulling. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 43)

That Wilkens used this strategy was corroborated by the teacher, who was asked by the principal to check out the math program:

> When I got that stuff from the Mathematics Society, which is a statewide math thing, he didn't say I had to do it. He said, you know, like would you be interested in doing this. He showed it to me. And I was interested. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 8)

This teacher also attended a writing project at the principal's request (TI, 3/10/83, pp. 14-15).

Another example of Wilkens's "pulling" strategy was his decision to have apprentice teachers come to Berry Hill. Student teachers from a university elementary education program came to the school to observe classes, serve as aides, and finally, to teach a class on their own. Wilkens believed that these teachers would bring in new ideas and encourage Berry Hill's teachers to think about what they did and to prepare their lessons more carefully. He also encouraged Berry Hill's teachers to use the time when the apprentices were teaching to observe classes in other schools and explore ways of diversifying their curriculum (FN, 4/22/83, p. 1; SO, 6/2/83, p. 7). As a result, several teachers went to an exhibit on puppetry at the city museum, which gave one the idea to organize puppet shows in her classrooms (FN, 6/2/83, p. 1). However, the majority of teachers did not visit other classrooms, and only a few reported taking outside classes (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 1; SFI, 5/31/83, p. 1; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 1).

Wilkens was also quite willing to respond to specific requests for assistance made by staff members. One teacher described how Wilkens had helped her with a hostile parent:

> Louis and this parent and myself were in there for about 10 minutes and I just couldn't believe . . . I just said, what is your secret for having a short conference? My conferences last from a half an hour to an hour, with a parent. And he helped give me some specific guidelines to structure conferences. (TI, 4/14/83, p. 6)

Another teacher said that when he asked Wilkens for help with grouping, the principal had come into his classroom and worked with him on a new approach (TI, 3/10/83, p. 11). This teacher commented:

> If you go up to Louis and say, "Hey, Louis, I'd like you to teach something" or else you're discussing something with him, then he'll say to you, "Oh, you know, I took a couple of courses in that and I really enjoyed that, and maybe I can share some ideas with you." That's what he'll do then. (TI, 3/10/83, p. 12)

This same teacher also acknowledged Wilkens's role in finding appropriate resources in response to teacher requests:

> Louis is [so] secure ego wise that I'm sure if I were to ask him [for help] that if Louis did not know something, he'd say, "What, me? I can't teach that." In that situation, Louis says, "Okay, I'll get you someone." (TI, 3/10/83, p. 11)

However, the principal was more likely to try to anticipate staff needs by encouraging teachers to share techniques among themselves. A kindergarten teacher said, "He's open to us going into another classroom" (TI, 4/18/83, p. 12). In fact, most teachers reported that on occasion they shared ideas or planned activities with other teachers in their circuit (SFI, 3/4/83, p. 1; SFI, 3/31/83, p. 1; SFI, 4/18/83, p. 1; SFI, 4/27/83, p. 1; SFI, 5/19/83, p. 1; SFI, 5/31/83, p. 1; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 1; SFI, 6/2/83, p. 1).

Teachers also perceived Wilkens as very supportive of teacher-initiated efforts toward general professional development, although he did not mandate such development. "If I asked, he would say yes, but I'd have to initiate," said one teacher (SFI, 4/18/83, p. 1). She elaborated:

> He isn't the type who says, "You should go take a class in such and such," but I think if there's something that they thought was worthwhile, he could make [the information] available to us, and so we could make our decision as to what we wanted to do. (TI, 4/18/83, p. 12)

Another agreed, saying, "If I want to go [to classes], I can" (SFI, 6/2/83, p. 1). And several teachers credited the principal with providing them the time for development activities and with giving them information about what programs were available (SFI, 4/27/83, p. 1; SFI, 5/31/83, p. 1).

Some teachers, however, when asked about Wilkens's role in furthering their professional development, said that the principal did very little. "I don't really think he is [involved in that]," said one teacher (TI, 4/28/83, p. 7); another said simply, "Nope" (TI, 4/13/83, p. 8). One suggested that "a new teacher might have greater relevancy to [that question]" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 12).

At least one teacher stated clearly that she wanted the principal to play a more direct role in giving feedback, etc. This teacher, who was returning to teaching after raising a family, was especially concerned about enhancing her ability. In comparing Wilkens to a principal under whom she had taught at another school, she noted a significant difference:

> A former principal of mine was . . . very geared to seeing that we all progress professionally. By the time we had been on his staff for three years, all of us had our master's degree. He just wanted us to keep abreast of all the things. He used to have in-service and programs for us a lot. I think I would like to see more professionalism maybe demanded of all of us [at Berry Hill]. (TI, 2/26/83, p. 5)

While this teacher appreciated the fact that Wilkens would find someone to fill in for her so that she could observe other classrooms, she wanted him to go beyond that (SO, 3/4/83, p. 2). She explained:

> One thing I've seen happen before and I think would have been a good idea is if he had visited enough rooms--which he has--and said to Linda, "Linda, would you take 10 minutes to do a lesson like da-da-da, that I saw in your room? That was super." And "Terry, I loved what I saw. Could you. . . ." You know, and have each of us do something that we--or share what it was [that he saw.] (TI, 2/26/83, p. 28)

The different perceptions of the various Berry Hill teachers regarding the principal's role in promoting general staff development might be attributed to Wilkens's "pulling" strategy. Perhaps his casual questions, workshop announcements, and "would-you-do-me-a-favor" requests were not perceived by some staff members as active support of professional development. This might especially be the case in that Wilkens had taken the helm in the wake of a very authoritarian predecessor. The subtlety of his techniques may have seemed by contrast as a lack of definite direction.

Summary: Berry Hill's School Ethos

The wooded hillside setting of Berry Hill Elementary School both symbolized and disguised the fundamental qualities of this primary school. The surrounding community, as might befit a secluded neighborhood, was affluent and stable. It was also predominately White, with most of its students coming from middle- to upper middle-class backgrounds. The parents were very active in the education of their children, who tended to score well above national averages on standardized tests of achievement.

Berry Hill, however, was also part of a large urban district and shared some of the problems that usually beset urban schools. Its physical plant was dilapidated. The hallways, despite the efforts of parents and teachers to enliven them, were barren. Classrooms did not at once strike the visitor as inviting places for study and learning. Moreover, teacher morale had dropped during the years prior to our study, and parents expressed dissatisfaction with the uneven quality of education that the school gave their children and were concerned that student test scores were decreasing.

Into this setting came Louis Wilkens, who had been designated a turnaround principal by the district. Wilkens's previous experience had led him to believe in the importance of teaching children how to function in institutions and how to follow rules, and his participation in a professional support group had led him to see the importance of establishing a positive climate if his school were to be successful. Improving the overall climate at Berry Hill was Wilkens's primary goal during his first year.

In order to deal with the school's vocal and exuberant children, Wilkens adopted a strategy of spending a great deal of time interacting with them informally. He supervised the children during lunch period and at recess, striking up conversations and exchanging greetings with the youngsters as they played. He avoided talking down to them, thereby conveying to them the importance of treating others with respect. Wilkens had also instituted the practice of holding daily assemblies, which provided a forum for students to perform for their peers, and which provided Wilkens the opportunity to answer questions and expound upon school policy. Finally, the principal attempted to guide the children's inquisitiveness into positive channels by giving them responsibility for making important decisions, such as selecting a photography studio to take the yearly school photos.

The school's active parent population presented the principal with similar challenges. Parents served as classroom aides, participated in parent organizations, and visited classrooms frequently in order to observe teachers in action. Although they enhanced the school program through their contributions of time and money, they also caused the principal a few problems. Their frequent visits to the campus had led Wilkens to label Berry

Hill a "drop-in" school. These visits also meant that many parents had formed definite impressions about the abilities of the school's teachers. If they thought that teachers at a certain grade level were below par, parents were quite willing to transfer their children to other schools in the district. Moreover, as illustrated by their objection to the quasi-religious teachings of an Applied Life Sciences course, parents were also likely to protest vigorously when they disagreed with the content or nature of instruction at the school.

Wilkens responded to Berry Hill's parents by taking every opportunity to emphasize the cooperative rather than the critical aspects of parent participation. When inviting parents to visit classrooms, he also told them to come prepared to work. When addressing classroom aides he reminded them that they, too, were students; teachers were the experts. His response to the controversy over the Applied Life Sciences course involved an effort to redirect attention from the course itself to the curriculum as a whole. (In Wilkens's eyes, Berry Hill's entire curriculum needed to be overhauled.)

Though he eventually wound up the controversy by cancelling the course, Wilkens and the staff as a whole managed to maintain a positive relationship with most of the Berry Hill community. In fact, during the controversy, some of the parents sent a giant-sized letter of appreciation to the principal and faculty.

Wilkens was also required to deal with a veteran staff whose morale had suffered under the authoritarian governance of the previous principal. Recognizing that a more low-key approach might help improve the outlook of his teachers, the principal adopted a strategy that he termed "pulling." According to Wilkens, "pulling" meant facilitating change by making suggestions, providing information, and supporting teacher initiatives. A significant aspect of his pulling strategy was conveying to his staff the feeling that he trusted them and that he was willing to back them if they wanted to begin new projects or test new techniques. A result of Wilkens's strategy was that his staff became more willing to experiment; puppet shows, field trips, and lessons on the stock market were added to the Berry Hill curriculum.

However, governance by "pulling" also had some drawbacks. Teachers often felt no pressure to adopt changes. Wilkens's attempt to get teachers to pilot a new social studies text was largely unsuccessful. Similarly, his efforts to revise substantially the school's disciplinary policy and the language arts curriculum yielded minor results. Teachers involved in these attempts often downplayed the principal's role as a leader. His methods may have been too subtle for some of his staff.

On the whole, the evidence suggests that Wilkens's efforts to improve climate at Berry Hill had been successful. Members of the Berry Hill community agreed that they felt better about being at the school since Wilkens's arrival. Staff members commented again and again that the principal's trust in them had made them better teachers and colleagues. They felt that, despite some lapses in the upper grades, students were more respectful toward teachers and toward each other. And though some parents did become very critical of a particular teacher during the Applied Life Sciences controversy, the issue did not drive a permanent wedge between parents and faculty. In fact, one might gauge Wilkens's success by remembering that early in the school year, he made the following statement to convey the tenor of his efforts:

> Now you can't smile all the time. I realize that. But somebody should be smiling most of the time--feeling good. (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21)

And by spring, smiles were much more plentiful, as this observation by a staff member attests:

> He's been here only seven months, but . . . there's a different atmosphere in this school than there was in the last three years. . . . The morale is just much stronger; it's much higher--people can walk around and smile, right? (TI, 4/14/83, p. 4)

PATTERNS AND PROCESSES
IN THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Finding Instructional Leadership in Principals' Routine Actions

We want to remind the reader, after this long descriptive narrative about Louis Wilkens and Berry Hill Elementary School, that our collaboration with this principal and others began as we sought to understand the principal's role in instructional leadership and management. We turned first to prior research about principals and found a major contradiction: While descriptive studies argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with instructional matters (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979), effective-school studies proffered the centrality of principals in the development of potent instructional organizations (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979).

Attempting to resolve this enigma, we interviewed dozens of principals and completed an intensive, eight-week pilot study. Based on these preliminary efforts, we strongly suspected that principals could be key agents in the creation of successful instructional settings:

> The intensiveness of the method employed in [our pilot studies] has allowed a very different concept of leadership behavior to emerge. This concept is one that visualizes instructional leadership accruing from the repetition of routine and mundane acts performed in accord with principals' overarching perspectives on schooling.
>
> If such is the case, research procedures must be finely tuned and pervasive enough in the school to reveal those behaviors and trace their effects. A lack of such thorough and field-based procedures may account for the frequent report that principals are not effective instructional leaders or that they do not occupy themselves with instructional matters. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 57)

This statement contained both conceptual and methodological premises that were distinct from those embodied in other studies about school principals.

Conceptually, we began our yearlong studies of principals attuned to the importance of routine activities like the ones we had noted during our pilot work: monitoring, controlling and exchanging information, planning, interacting with students, hiring and training staff, and overseeing building maintenance. We had written about these behaviors:

> These are the routine and mundane acts through which principals can assess the working status of their organizations and the progress of their schools relative to long-term goals. They are the acts which allow principals to alter the course of events midstream: to return aberrant student behavior to acceptable norms; to suggest changes in teaching style or intervene to demonstrate a preferred form of instruction; to develop student, teacher, or community support for programs already underway; to develop an awareness of changes in the organization that must be made in the future. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 54)

The "success" of these actions for instructional management, we wrote, "hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system" (p. 54), for we had found that the principals with whom we worked believed that they could and did influence the instructional systems in their schools.

We also found that each of our principals held a working theory of his or her instructional system--an overarching perspective--that guided his or her actions. Those overarching perspectives were complex constellations of personal experiences, community and district "givens," principals' behaviors, and instructional climate and organization variables that offered both direct and circuitous routes along which principals could influence their schools and the experiences their students encountered daily. (Our generalized model is illustrated in Figure 1 in the Foreword.)

The purposes of principals' actions, however, were not always transparent, and the consequences of their activities were not necessarily immediate. In addition, the impact of routine behaviors might be cumulative; we would have to watch the same actions again and again before we could see noticeable change in the instructional systems of our schools. Thus, finding the subtle linkages between principals' actions and instructional outcomes in schools would require the most intensive effort we could mount; we needed to spend as much time as possible in our schools; we needed to question participants in the scenes we witnessed about their interactions, and about the purposes and outcomes of principals' actions.

We accomplished this intensive examination of the daily work of principals primarily with a combination of observation and interview procedures which we called the shadow and the reflective interview. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a full description of this procedure.) The intensive application of the full range of our inquiry activities aligned our work with the research tradition variously called educational ethnography, participant observation, or case study by its leading practitioners (e.g., Becker, Greer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Cicourel et al., 1974; Smith, 1978; Spindler, 1982; Walker, 1932; Wax, Wax, & DuMont, 1964).

We spent over a thousand hours in our 12 schools, an effort that yielded approximately 10,000 pages of descriptive material about the work of principals. When we analyzed this body of material to discover simply what principals do, we found that their activities could be broken down into nine categories of principals' routine behaviors:

Goal Setting & Planning: Defining or determining future outcomes. Making decisions about, or formulating means for, achieving those ends.

Monitoring: Reviewing, watching, checking, being present without a formal evaluation intended.

Evaluating: Appraising or judging with regard to persons, programs, material, etc. May include providing feedback.

Communicating: Various forms of verbal exchange, including greeting, informing, counseling, commenting, etc. Also includes forms of nonverbal communication such as physical contacts, gestures, and facial expressions.

Scheduling, Allocating Resources, & Organizing: Making decisions about allocations of time, space, materials, personnel, and energy. Arranging or coordinating projects, programs, or events.

Staffing: Hiring and placement of teaching staff, specialists, and support personnel.

Modeling: Demonstrating teaching techniques or strategies of interaction for teachers, other staff, parents, or students.

> **Governing:** Decision making with regard to policy. Legislating, enforcing policy or rules.
>
> **Filling In:** Substituting for another staff member (nurse, maintenance person, secretary, teacher) on a temporary basis.

We found that well over 50% of our observations of principals fit the Communicating category and that Monitoring, Scheduling/Allocating Resources/Organizing, and Governing encompassed most of our remaining observations. Analyzing our interviews with teachers about what principals do produced nearly an identical profile.

Our profiles of what principals do in their schools--their behaviors--illustrate, again, what many others have reported: Principals' activities are typically very short, face-to-face interactions with students, teachers, parents, or other participants in school organizations; their interactions usually occur almost anywhere but in their own offices; and the topics of their interactions change frequently and abruptly. A study by Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, and Porter-Gehrie (1982), for example, reported that the principal's day is composed of "school monitoring behaviors," "serving as school spokesperson," "serving the school staff internally as a disseminator of information," and "serving the school as both disturbance handler and resource allocator" (p. 689). Another study (Martin & Willower, 1981) likened the principal's work to private sector management after a Mintzberg-type study of the activities of school principals. They, too, found that principals' work is characterized by "variety, brevity, and fragmentation" (p. 79), and that the preponderance (84.8%) of the activities of the principals who participated in their study involved "purely verbal elements" (p. 80).

These researchers concluded from their observations that the principal's role as an instructional leader is relatively minor. Morris et al. stated that "instructional leadership (in terms of classroom observation and teacher supervision) is not the central focus of the principalship" (p. 689), while Martin and Willower reported:

> Perhaps the most widely heralded role of the principal is that of instructional leader, which conjures up images of a task routine dominated by the generation of innovative curricula and novel teaching strategies. The principals in this study spent 17.4% of their time on instructional matters. . . . the majority of the routine education of youngsters that occurred in the schools was clearly the province of the teaching staff. (p. 83)

Another recent study by Newburg and Glatthorn (1983) also concluded that "for the most part principals do not provide instructional leadership" (p. v).

The major problem with these studies, we believe, lies in an overly narrow conception of instructional leadership that is implicitly rational and bureaucratic, despite the fact that principals work in organizations that have been described as "loosely coupled" (Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Weick, 1976) and even "disorderly" (Perrow, 1982). Only those behaviors that were directly and formally concerned with instruction were examined, and researchers acknowledged that they could make little sense of the vast majority of principals' activities. The Morris group wrote:

> Everything seems to blend together in an undifferentiated jumble of activities that are presumably related, however remotely, to the ongoing rhythm and purpose of the larger enterprise. (1982, p. 689)

The major purpose of our study was to untangle that previously "undifferentiated jumble" of principal behaviors to see how the principal influenced instruction through the culture of the school (Firestone & Wilson, 1983) or through the exercise of routine activities (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). To take this necessary step, we examined the meanings principals and other participants in the school settings attributed to principals' activities. As both Greenfield (1982) and Bridges (1982) had recommended, we probed for the antecedents and consequences of principals' behaviors.

We considered the entire range of behaviors from the thousands of pages that we had acquired during our yearlong study, looking for the purposes of those acts--the targets of principals' activities. The reflective interviews proved to be the most revealing documents, since they captured insiders' perspectives about the meanings of principals' actions. Again, we produced a list of categories that encompassed all of our episodes. These "targets" or purposes included:

> **Work Structure:** All components related to the task of delivering instruction.
>
> **Staff Relations:** Outcomes concerning the feelings and/or personal needs of individual staff members.
>
> **Student Relations:** Outcomes concerning the feelings, attitudes, or personal needs (academic, social, or psychological) of students.
>
> **Safety & Order:** Features of the physical organization, rules, and procedures of the

school that influence the safety of members and the capacity of members to carry out their work.

Plant & Equipment: Elements of the physical plant such as the building, grounds, audiovisual equipment, office machines, etc.

Community Relations: Outcomes concerning the attitudes and involvement of parents or other community members.

Institutional Relations: Outcomes related to the district office, other schools, or other formal organizations outside the school.

Institutional Ethos: School culture or spirit. May refer to features of the school program or to a "tone" that contributes to the school's unique identity and constitutes shared meaning among members of the school organization.

Combining the nine types of routine behaviors previously discussed with these eight targets or purposes provided a matrix of 72 discrete action cells. Combining behavior with purpose in this manner helped reveal patterns in the previously chaotic impressions of principals' actions. Sometimes these patterns were related to contextual or personal idiosyncrasies in the settings; sometimes they could be attributed to principals' carefully reasoned approaches. But in all instances, we found interesting leadership stories, where principals strived within their limits to set the conditions for, or the parameters of, instruction.

In this manner, we believe we have taken a significant step in revealing various ways in which principals can exercise instructional leadership. The remaining section of this case study of Principal Louis Wilkens discusses the results of our analysis of his routine behaviors and illustrates the manner in which we believe Wilkens led the instructional program at his school.

Wilkens's Enactment of Instructional Leadership

We have related the disparate opinions about the role of the principal as instructional leader found in the research literature. Further, we have noted the importance we place on the routine actions of principals--what other researchers have called an "undifferentiated jumble" of activities; we believe that principals can use their routine activities to influence their instructional organizations significantly. In this final section of the Louis Wilkens case study, we will delve into that jumble, find an order that is related to the specific context in which Wilkens worked, and disclose a cogent picture of Wilkens's role as instructional leader at Berry Hill Elementary School.

By introducing Berry Hill's setting and actors, portraying a day in the life of Louis Wilkens, and describing the instructional climate and organization of the school, we presented a plethora of details about Berry Hill School. The purpose of our narrative was to give the reader a holistic impression of this setting and principal. Yet, while the narrative does provide the necessary background for our story of instructional leadership, we must now construe the data to illuminate Wilkens's role and the impact of his routine actions in that organization.

After completing the field portion of our study, we sorted the hundreds of Wilkens's activities that we observed into the nine behavior categories established in our analysis (see pages 93-94); the result is presented in Figure 5 (p. 98), "Distribution of Principal Wilkens's Routine Behaviors." This figure illustrates what Wilkens did in his school during the time we spent there. In this display, we can see that Wilkens's routine behaviors, like those of every other principal in our study, were predominately acts of communication (61.6%). One easily recalls from the narrative the number of instances in which Wilkens discussed school policy with parents, talked to teachers about instructional matters, interacted with children on the playground, and presided over the school's daily assemblies.

Figure 5 also shows that substantial percentages of Wilkens's activities could be described as acts of Scheduling/Allocating Resources/Organizing (11.3%), Governing (10%), Monitoring (8.4%), and Goal Setting (5.2%). Specific examples of these types of generalized behaviors can be recalled from the narrative: Wilkens assigned students to classrooms, ensured that teachers had space and equipment to do their jobs well, and negotiated teacher requests; he resolved conflicts that arose between members of the Berry Hill population; he informally observed instruction during classroom visits and supervised the play yard during lunch; and he attempted to standardize the language arts curriculum by scheduling a series of in-service meetings.

Figure 5 also demonstrates that during the year we were in the school, Wilkens seldom used Evaluating (1.5%), Filling In (1%), and Staffing (0.7%). Modeling is listed as Wilkens's most infrequent activity, encompassing only 0.4% of his routine actions. Our narrative, however, has stressed modeling as an important tactic in Wilkens's arsenal of behaviors. We discuss this discrepancy at length below in our analysis of Wilkens's strategies for establishing the instructional climate at Berry Hill.

Although this breakdown of Wilkens's behaviors highlights his preference for conducting school business through face-to-face encounters, it does not reveal the purposes of his activities or the consequences of his acts. The next step in understanding principals' roles is to discover why they do what they do. On pages 95-96, we described eight categories of purposes to which principals, teachers, and students assigned the behaviors of the principals that we witnessed in our 12 research settings. These

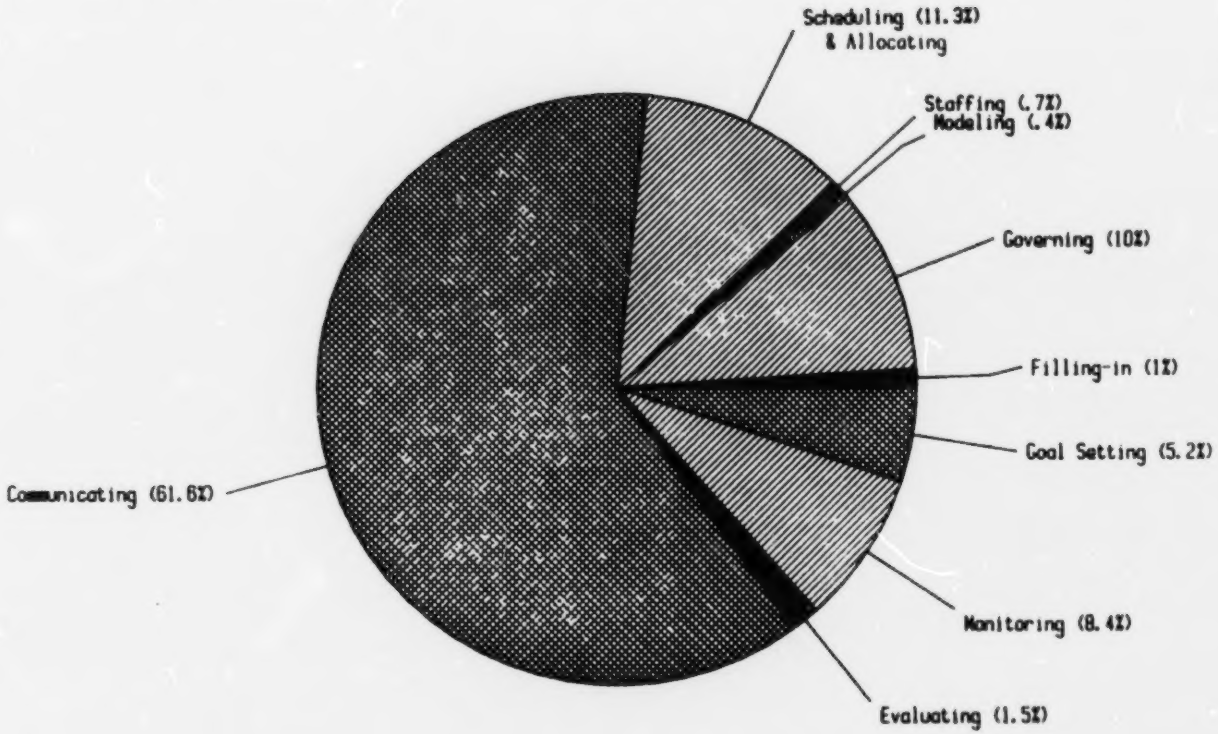

Figure 5: Distribution of Principal Wilkens's Routine Behaviors

meanings, when combined with principals' behaviors, disclose purposeful actions where previous researchers saw only an "undifferentiated jumble."

The five largest clusters of Wilkens's actions, when examined in sequence, reveal that the primary target of his most routine behaviors was Berry Hill's work structure, comprising all those proximal or distal components related to the delivery of instruction. (See Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 on pages 100, 101, 102, and 103.) In fact, 50% of Wilkens's activities were aimed at influencing some aspect of the work structure. The same figures indicate that his next largest target category was community relations.

Another way to examine Wilkens's actions is to focus on the 72 combinations of principal behaviors and targets in our analytic scheme. This analysis reveals that most of Wilkens's actions (81%) fell into only 10 of those cells. Rank ordered, his most routine activities included:

Communicating/Work Structure (23%)
Communicating/Community Relations (10%)
Scheduling, Allocating, & Organizing/Work Structure (10%)
Communicating/Staff Relations (8%)
Communicating/Student Relations (7%)
Governing/Work Structure (6%)
Communicating/Institutional Relations (5%)
Goal Setting/Work Structure (4%)
Monitoring/Work Structure (4%)
Governing/Safety & Order (4%)

If we begin with this analysis of Wilkens's most routine actions as principal of Berry Hill Elementary School and add to it the array of facts presented in the narrative about the school's setting and actors--the community and district, Wilkens's own background and beliefs, the nature of the instructional climate and organization at Berry Hill, and Wilkens's aspirations for his school and his students--we get a very complete picture of Berry Hill Elementary School. The meaning or purpose of Wilkens's "jumble" of routine actions also becomes patently clear.

The general model we illustrated in Figure 1 (p. v) can be used to frame an overarching perspective of instructional management at Berry Hill. The community and institutional context "boxes" indicate fundamental system "givens," aspects of the Berry Hill context that Wilkens could not usually control and that influenced his decisions. Important characteristics of the community that Berry Hill served included: a predominately White middle- and upper middle-class population; active groups of parents who did not hesitate to protest school policy or to transfer their children to another school in search of better teachers; and a level of student achievement that did not meet parental or district expectations.

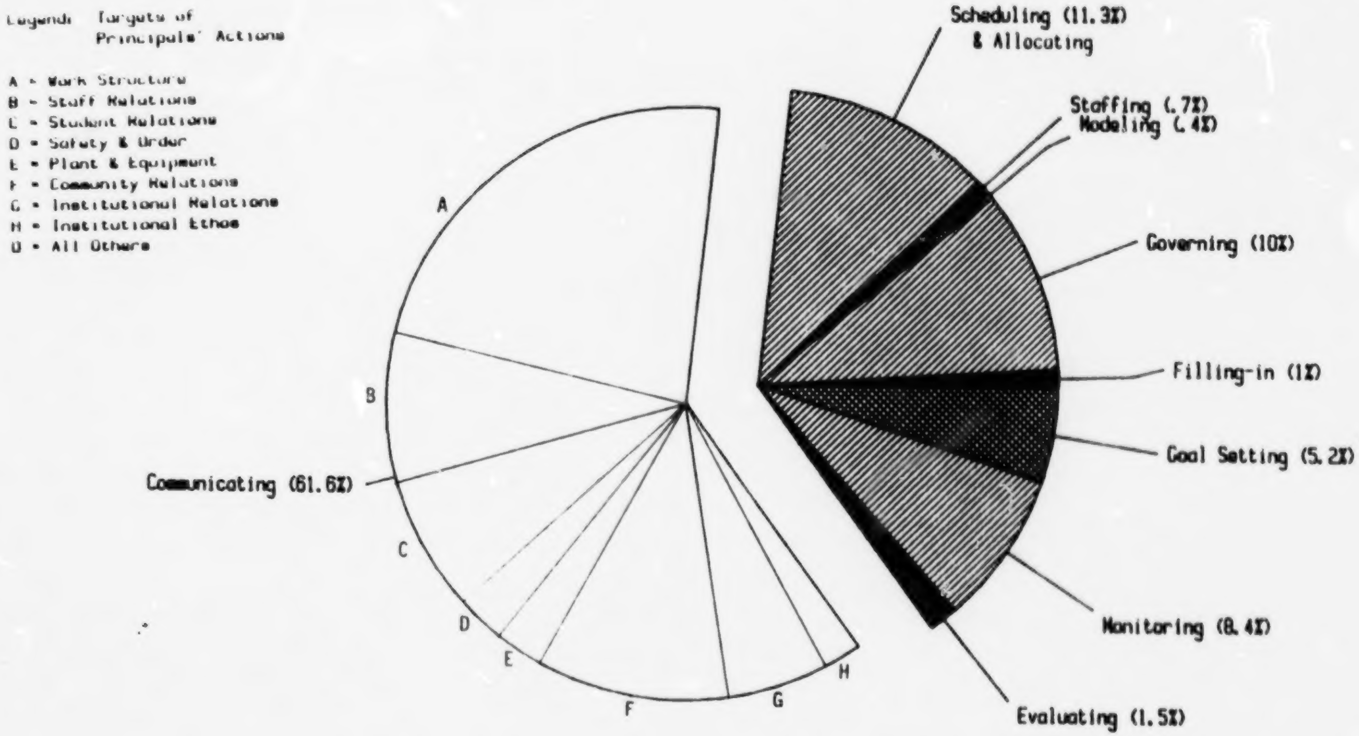

Figure 6: Distribution of Principal Wilkens's
Routine Actions: Communicating

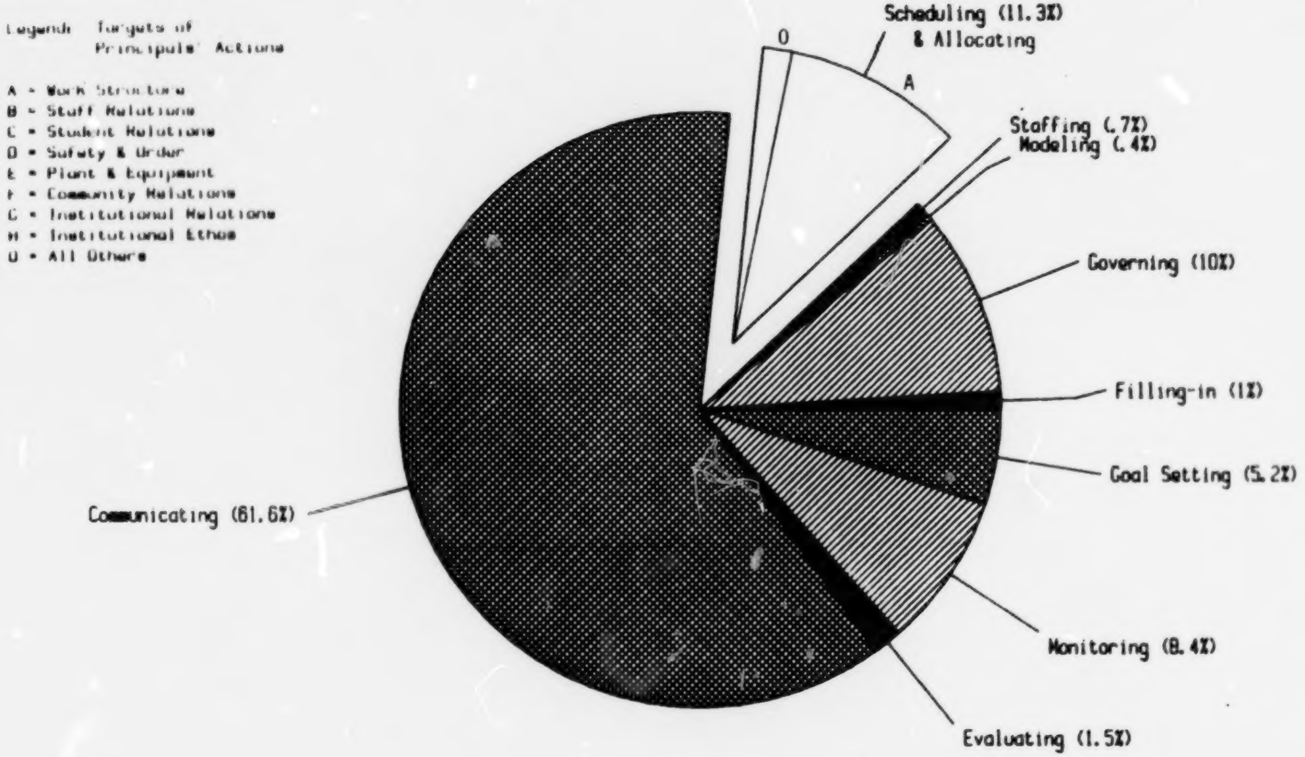

Figure 7: Distribution of Principal Wilkens's Routine Actions: Scheduling, Allocating Resources, and Organizing

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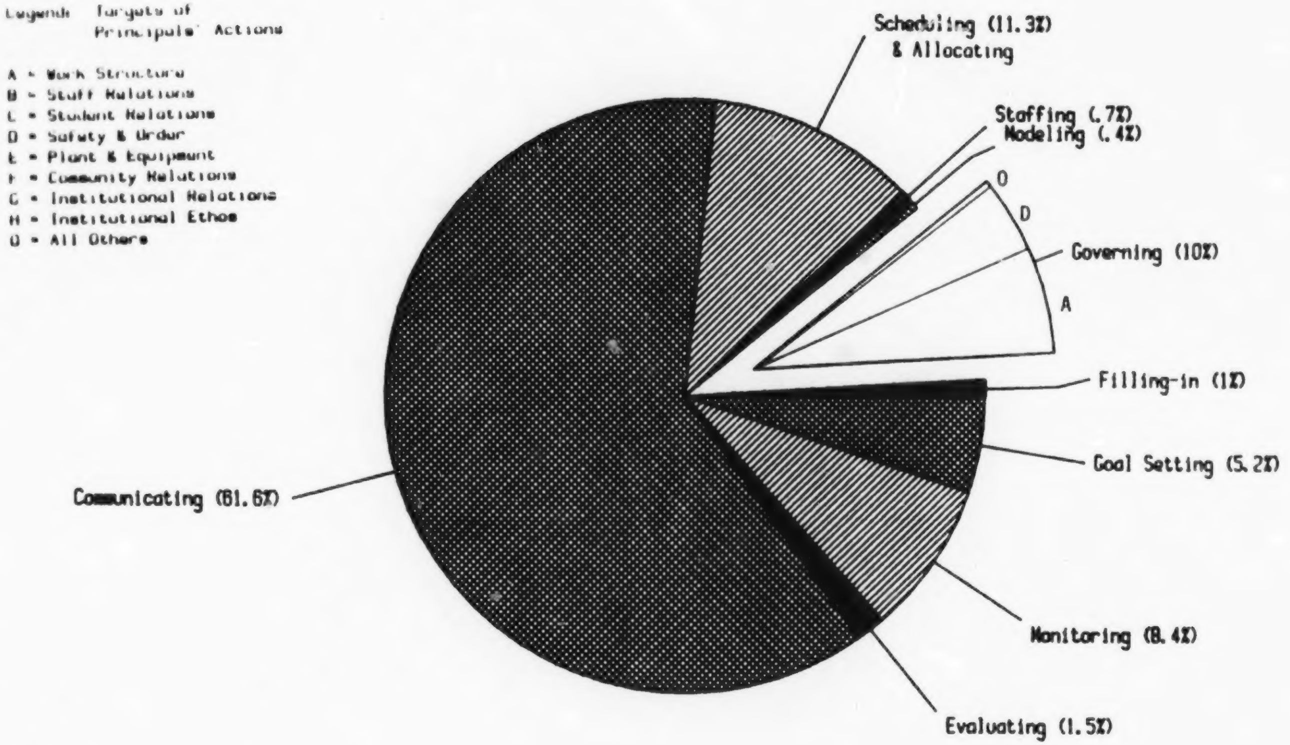

Figure 8: Distribution of Principal Wilkens's Routine Actions: Governing

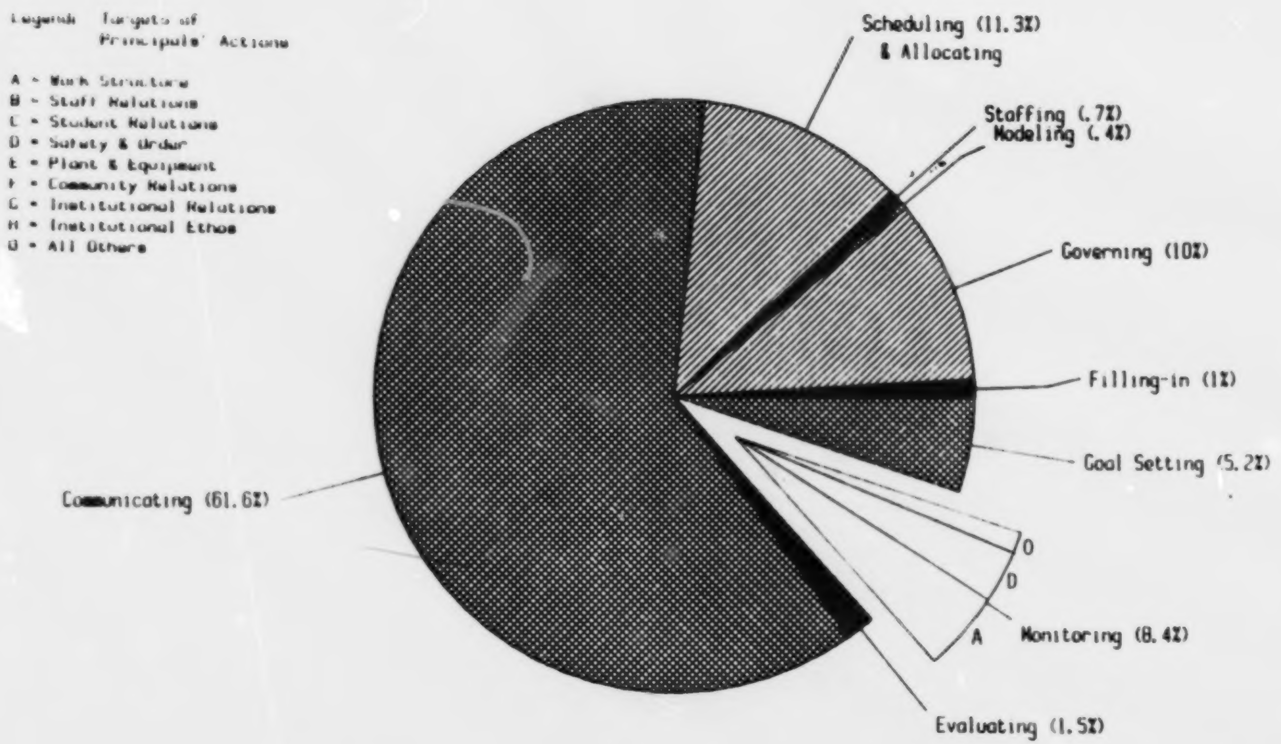

Figure 9: Distribution of Principal Wilkens's Routine Actions: Monitoring

Wilkens found Berry Hill's parents to be both assets and obstacles to his mission at the school. The parents were sophisticated, articulate, and quite ready to take on projects on behalf of the school. Once a course of action had been decided upon, parents quickly delegated responsibilities and immediately began completing the task. The Parent/Faculty Club had, in fact, organized and subsidized a library awareness project, a computer program, and a cognitive/motor integration program.

But parents were also quick to criticize their school and make judgments about particular teachers. Known to be outspoken about issues, they did not hesitate to inform the district office of their feelings. Wilkens got an immediate taste of this type of action soon after school opened when some parents protested a classroom transfer by taking their complaints to the assistant superintendent.

Another "given" for Wilkens was his district's emphasis on standardized testing. Although Berry Hill's students were performing above national norms, their scores were not at the level expected by the district and by many parents. Coming from a school where test scores were considerably lower, Wilkens took the district's injunction to raise test scores seriously but perhaps not with an overwhelming sense of urgency.

Another major "given" in the Berry Hill instructional system was the school's teaching staff. They were experienced teachers who were accustomed to an autonomous workstyle but had been demoralized by demands and criticisms of the former principal.

Wilkens's own beliefs were also important "givens" that helped shape his actions as Berry Hill's principal. He believed in the efficacy of institutions. In the principal's eyes, the structure provided by an institution helped facilitate positive personal interactions. Institutional structures required individuals to show one another mutual respect.

Contributing to this philosophy were a number of factors. Wilkens recalled his own schooling experience in a Jesuit system as demanding, traditional, and humanitarian, where respect and hard work were unquestionable tenets. His stint in the Air Force and his authoritarian teaching mentor had underscored for the principal the importance of rules and the efficacy of strong management. His belief in respect and in the importance of human relations was reinforced by his participation in a principal support group. The group, Associates for School Improvement, was a national organization which stressed to its members that high academic achievement and an enjoyment of learning were best promoted by teaching students to respect themselves and others.

More than any of the other principals in these case studies, Wilkens took advantage of collegial ties to share common instructional management concerns and solutions with principals from other school districts. He looked for career development activities that would both hone his administrative skills and improve the school in which he worked. He attempted to apply what he had learned in the management seminars and in the classes he had taken while earning a master's degree in public administration. For example, the idea to allow the Parent/Faculty Club president to chair the community meeting on the school's curriculum and to place himself in the role of facilitator came from a workshop on improving management techniques. The practice of holding weekly administrative meetings, new to Berry Hill, was something Wilkens had read about in a text and had decided to try.

Finally, the principal's personal characteristics also helped to shape his managerial behaviors. His frequent use of humor, which was present even during his meetings with other principals, acted to abate tensions with staff, students, and parents. His low-key presence and his preference for modeling appropriate behavior were two more of the incoming principal's weapons with which he combatted the strained atmosphere that prevailed in the wake of his predecessor.

Although Wilkens's outlook on turning Berry Hill around was shaped in some way by all these various givens, his structured but humanitarian beliefs formed the core of his calm, casual, and often indirect style of management. While he found it important to consider instructional organization, the school's instructional climate was the cornerstone in Wilkens's plan for Berry Hill. And in the next sections we analyze how the principal's activities did or did not contribute to a workable instructional climate and instructional organization at Berry Hill Elementary School.

Establishing the Instructional Climate: Wilkens's first priority was to improve the climate at Berry Hill. In the years before Wilkens's arrival, student and staff morale had been low, and the community had sometimes criticized the school harshly. As indicated earlier, the principal viewed human relations as his strong suit and felt quite ready to step into the "turnaround" role that the district had handed him. Yet, though Wilkens regarded the task of improving student, staff, and community relations as his most important charge, our categorization of the targets of his routine activities reveals that the principal most often focused on the school's work structure, which we define as all components related to the task of delivering instruction. Commmunity relations was a distant second.

The emergence of work structure as Wilkens's favorite target should be no surprise. All the principals whom we studied directed most of their efforts toward the work structures of their schools. In Wilkens's case, this general tendency might have been reinforced by his all-encompassing view of climate. The reader may remember that Wilkens, when speaking of Berry Hill's curriculum, said, "You can't divorce [it from] climate" (TI, 9/7/82, p. 41). Wilkens was also the principal who had made the statement, "School climate begins at the curb" (FN, 8/6/83, p. 3). In accordance with this statement, he often viewed interpersonal problems as having structural or curricular solutions. A specific example here is Wilkens's decision to hire Harold McCauley to teach Applied Life Sciences. The decision had immediate effects upon the school's work structure, but its rationale was the principal's belief that the course's curriculum would improve student morale (FN, 9/13/82, p. 13).

Second, the tendency of Berry Hill's parents and, to a lesser extent, its staff to couch criticisms of the school in personal terms may have been a factor in determining Wilkens's predilection to focus on work structure. Our narrative reveals that parents were quite willing to make judgments about the teaching skills of individual teachers. For example, aside from their objections to Harold McCauley's Applied Life Sciences course, Berry Hill's parents believed that McCauley was weak in language arts. The principal may have found this lack of confidence in McCauley somewhat distressing because many parents had already expressed their displeasure with the other fifth/sixth-grade teachers. So when making staff assignments for the following year, Wilkens made his decisions with an eye toward placating parents. He moved McCauley to kindergarten in order to capitalize upon the teacher's interpersonal skills and to compensate for any perceived deficiency on McCauley's part by pairing him with a "star" teacher. Wilkens then moved a highly regarded third-grade teacher to the fifth/sixth grade level to alleviate community fears about inferior teaching quality in those grades. As Wilkens's tactics illustrate, increasing community satisfaction with the school was synonymous with improving the school's work structure.

The reader should also remember that the shouting matches over the Applied Life Sciences course sometimes included personal statements about McCauley (TI, 3/9/83, p. 3). In this light, the principal's attempt to use the objections to Applied Life Sciences as a way to initiate a full-scale analysis of the school's curriculum becomes a method of redirecting and reshaping community involvement at the school. Wilkens hoped that by shifting the focus to the school's work structure he could transform a confrontational interaction into a collaborative one.

This is not to say that Wilkens took no direct measures toward improving interrelationships at the school. Our narrative notes a number of activities aimed specifically toward improving climate. At the first faculty meeting, he told teachers to "respect each other." And the daily assemblies he instituted were designed to help set the tone for each school day and to upgrade student morale. But it was his friendly, and often playful, informal encounters with students and staff in the halls, in the lunchrooms, on the playground, and in the office that became his chief means of conveying his message of respect.

Wilkens believed it important to remain accessible to students. From the beginning, he rarely spent time in his office, preferring to supervise the halls and the playgrounds. Always ready with a teasing or complimentary remark, Wilkens established an easy rapport with students. He looked for opportunities to show students that he trusted them. He willingly delegated authority to them. He assigned students the task of determining which photography studio would take school portraits, and he allowed the student group he supervised on the overnight boat trip to make all the decisions. In both cases, he praised the students for their maturity.

Wilkens's choice of disciplinary methods was also in keeping with his efforts to improve student morale. The principal usually made his points in a nonaggressive manner, often using humor to defuse an uncomfortable situation and neutralize a child's defensive posture. After he had spotted kids with behavioral problems, he purposefully sought to develop friendships with them. By selecting potential and proven troublemakers to be his special buddies, the principal hoped to deter these students from committing further offenses. The SIP coordinator, who also functioned in an instructional leadership capacity, had identified Wilkens's key strengths as his ability to anticipate problems and his unobtrusive manner of intervention. The principal's disciplinary tactics were some of the proactive measures that helped build school climate.

In the second section of our study, we stated again and again that the principal's informal modeling was one of his most effective devices for creating an environment conducive to academic success. Early in the year, he had told his staff to consider themselves role models, and through his actions, he backed up the pronouncements he made during staff meetings and student assemblies. The casual conversations he sought out with students and staff illustrated his emphasis on friendliness and respect. As he asked students to keep the playground clean, he also picked up trash, which helped convey his "We're a family here" theme. When he talked with staff he refrained from making any disparaging comments about the previous principal.

This being said, the reader may find it surprising that our distribution of Wilkens's routine actions reveals that modeling encompasses only 0.4% of the principal's routine activities. Two circumstances account for the discrepancy. First, for the purpose of encoding our data, we defined modeling as those instances in which the principal demonstrated for emulation specific methods of dealing with specific problems. For example, Wilkens's activities in the story of the photography studio were not recorded as modeling but as: (1) Communication directed toward work structure; (2) Communication directed toward student relations; and (3) Scheduling and allocating resources directed toward work structure. (Readers further interested in our methods of data collection and transcription are referred to the companion volume, Methodology.) However, when this episode is viewed in light of other aspects of the story, especially Wilkens's decisions to share the outcomes of his strategy with staff members and to admit to teachers that, at first, he had doubted the students' ability to handle the responsibility, it becomes an example of modeling. Wilkens was demonstrating for his teachers a general method of interacting with students--a method echoed in the Living with Nature project, which a staff member undertook even as she entertained doubts about its feasibility (TI, 3/9/83, p. 9).

The second circumstance that must be taken into account is the pervasiveness of Wilkens's use of modeling. The various nuances of Wilkens's manner were behaviors which he hoped would be emulated. The reader will, perhaps, recall that Wilkens's somewhat formal manner of dress was calculated to convey a tone about the school (TI, 9/7/82, p. 21). Although he never directed staff members to change their habits of dress, some had done so, which suggests that they viewed the principal's everyday habits as examples for them to follow. Similarly, the tone of Wilkens's many communications with students was as important as the message they conveyed--a lesson that was not lost on staff members. For example, in accounting for improvements in his own relations with students, one teacher commented, "[I've] seen him [Wilkens] talk to kids" (TI, 3/10/83, p. 16). In some real sense, Wilkens viewed the school as a stage upon which he was constantly performing.

The positive outcomes of Wilkens's tactics for improving climate were many. Student behavior improved and some children reported that the number of food fights in the cafeteria had decreased when compared to the previous year (FN, 10/28/82, pp. 4-5). Children with whom we spoke enjoyed the entertaining aspects of the assemblies which Wilkens used to propagandize the idea that school was a fun place to be. From their comments too, it was evident that Wilkens's lectures about respect for others had not fallen on deaf ears.

Teacher morale was much higher than before. As we mentioned earlier, the staff that Wilkens had inherited was an experienced one with a strong tradition of teacher autonomy. His predecessor's demanding and critical manner had alienated teachers, who made her the butt of many jokes. In contrast, Wilkens had adopted a low-key style of governing, which he termed "pulling." Rather than issue directives, the principal made suggestions and passed on information to various staff members. Wilkens's "pulling" seemed to have had its desired effect. There was less in-fighting among the staff. The verbal sparring and bickering in the staff lunchroom changed to a goodwilled banter and exchange of teaching ideas. Knowing that they had the support of the principal, teachers expressed a willingness to try new tactics and techniques. The secretary and the teachers both commented that the school's atmosphere had improved since their new principal had taken over. And though the level of esprit de corps that Wilkens nurtured among his teachers may not have equalled that described in the other schools we studied, it did rise markedly, and quite possibly, the staff's independent workstyle might not have accommodated much more cohesiveness.

Wilkens was also able to elicit a generally cooperative rather than critical involvement from the community. He had begun efforts to stem the tide of transiency created by student transfers within the district. He had involved parents in a restructuring of the GATE program. The positive relationship that he had nurtured between the school and the community even survived the Applied Life Sciences controversy. During the height of the arguments, a group of parents sent the principal and staff a letter declaring their continued support for the school.

The heart of the story of Wilken's approach to establishing instructional climate at Berry Hill may be the principal's flexibility. Unlike a principal in one of our other case studies who found that parent and district expectations acted as rigid constraints on his ability to shape the instructional climate, Wilkens seemed to work comfortably within institutional and community "givens," using whatever methods he felt most benefitted school climate and discarding those strategies he perceived as detrimental to his ultimate goal (see Jonathan Rolf, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School). The belief that "bureaucracy is negotiable" seemed to guide Wilkens as he set about his task of improving the school climate at Berry Hill (TI, 9/7/82, p. 28).

If one compares some of the statements made by Wilkens at the beginning of the year with the tactics he employed during the school term, the level of the principal's flexibility becomes evident. For example, at the first staff meeting Wilkens described himself as a "structured authoritarian." Yet, as he interacted with teachers during the year, he adopted a low-key style of governing that eschewed authoritarian methods. Similarly, though he had forecast to his staff a thunderous manner of dealing with student disciplinary problems, his methods, in practice, were quite mild.

And throughout the year, Wilkens moderated some of his other positions in accordance with community opinions. His decisions to group talented students and to retain combined-grade classes were made in an effort to accommodate community preferences: Parents of talented students wanted their children ability-grouped; and though most parents did not favor combination classes, some did have particular likes and dislikes for teachers, which were easier to work around in the combined-grade structure.

We want to emphasize, however, that flexibility on Wilkens's part did not indicate total capitulation to the desires of parents and teachers. He held firm against those parents who protested when their children were transferred from one teacher to another. He attempted to harness the parental interest that was engendered by the lack of a GATE committee and the objections to the Applied Life Sciences course and apply it to his long-range goal of restructuring the curriculum at Berry Hill. And though he did not mandate changes for his staff members, he did continue to work subtly at his plans for changes in curriculum and discipline throughout the year.

In summary, Wilkens's flexible orientation proved a definite asset to his job as a turnaround principal. His success at improving school climate resulted directly from his ability to adapt his methods to the situation in which he worked. Keeping his ultimate goals in mind, he sometimes pushed for his objectives and sometimes decided it was best to soft-pedal the changes he wanted to implement. As we shall see in the succeeding section, his methods did have some drawbacks, but Wilkens had been quite successful at establishing a positive instructional climate at Berry Hill.

Establishing the Instructional Organization: We have seen above that climate and instructional organization were closely connected in Wilkens's view of schools. In the previous section, we saw the principal dealing with issues of instruction in such a way as to improve school climate. Indeed, in this section as well, many of Wilkens's actions will be two-pronged, having a direct effect on the school's various structures and also affecting Berry Hill's instructional climate. But in this section, we focus on the impact of Wilkens's actions on classroom instruction for students.

Looking again at the connection between climate and instruction, we see that Wilkens worked on climate, in part, as a way to influence instruction. His successful efforts to improve staff morale, as described above, were intended to promote a happier, and therefore more productive, teaching staff, which was ready and willing to seek out and apply improved teaching methods.

As Wilkens joked with his teachers, provided encouragement, and offered opportunities, he sought to stimulate his staff to grow in their own individual ways, so that change would come from within. A sense of confidence and efficacy among teachers and an environment that supported their personally directed growth were seen as contributing directly to quality education for youngsters.

This view of how to enhance instruction has been termed the "logic of confidence" (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). One of Wilkens's accomplishments in his first year was to create in his entire staff a shared belief in this logic. All teachers spoke of the confidence in his staff that Wilkens had communicated and of the support and encouragement that they felt. They believed that he trusted them as professionals, and they tried to live up to his image of them. Asserting that the school's positive atmosphere had made them work harder, they reported specific examples of activities that they would not have undertaken without Wilkens's support, perhaps the most ambitious of which was the Living with Nature project.

Wilkens may have had this chain of effect in mind when he said as early as January that he had "done his job" as turnaround principal of Berry Hill and that he could probably leave at that point, although he anticipated staying for about two more years (SO, 1/12/83, p. 17). The next step, in his view, was to work toward specific improvements in curriculum and instruction. He approached this task with less relish than he did that of improving school climate but with a general sense of direction and a variety of ideas about how to proceed. He attended especially to the content of instruction and to structures and placement, leaving the specifics of pedagogy or teaching techniques almost entirely up to the individual teachers.

Wilkens held a number of notions about how the content of instruction at Berry Hill could be improved. He believed that instruction was driven too much by the school-adopted textbooks. Instead, he preferred to see teachers plan units aimed at teaching specific objectives appropriate to the needs of youngsters and which incorporated a variety of materials and learning experiences. He worked to increase both the articulation of curriculum standards across grade levels and the variety of approaches teachers used to convey that content.

Wilkens's focus on schoolwide curriculum standards was a response to the district's emphasis on standardized test scores and to a shared tendency by Berry Hill's parents to "shop" for the best teacher. One of the suggestions that Wilkens made for standardizing the school curriculum was to center it upon a curriculum kit whose lessons were geared to the district's standardized tests. During the school year, the BASIS kit, as it was called, had been adopted in a limited fashion by some teachers, one of whom recognized the kit's potential to become the centerpiece of Berry Hill's curriculum. This same teacher, however, felt that the school was not ready to make such a wholesale change.

A standardized curriculum would also, Wilkens hoped, stem the tide of "teacher shopping" by parents at Berry Hill. During the series of language arts in-service meetings that had been instituted at Wilkens's suggestion, the principal told teachers that one of his goals was to develop a set of standards that he could show to parents. Parents could then decide whether they wanted their children to attend Berry Hill or not, basing their decisions on the curriculum rather than on individual teachers. Also, Wilkens supported programs like the Living with Nature project, which brought enrichment and depth to the curriculum. Again, he saw that such programs could provide a distinctive school image that would increase community support.

While these changes could have substantially restructured the Berry Hill curriculum, Wilkens soft-pedaled them to his staff. At the first staff meeting, he said that he had "no big plans," and indeed, in many ways he seemed to use his first year in a new school as one for taking stock of his new situation. Knowing that the staff's relationship with the previous principal had been a poor one, he undoubtedly wanted to put his teachers at ease. Moreover, he was personally inclined, through both belief and personality, to work toward change in a low-key, indirect manner, facilitating improvements rather than directing them.

The result of his approach was a lot of small changes in curriculum. In fact, in one year, Wilkens had some small influence on almost every subject area. New textbooks were piloted or adopted. Supplementary materials were made available. The language arts curriculum was clarified. Pullout writing instruction was provided for GATE students. Individual teachers attended workshops or observed other classes to learn curriculum methods. And Wilkens became personally involved in planning a new science curriculum for the following year. While none of these changes was introduced as, or became, a major overhaul, each got teachers more accustomed to the kind of curriculum planning that Wilkens had in mind. He seemed to be planting seeds, many seeds, hoping that some would take root and that teachers would make the major changes on their own.

Wilkens was less reserved in matters regarding the structure of classes and the assignment of students and teachers. Although when making decisions about these issues he often sought input from others, he viewed these areas as his own responsibility. And when making changes, he often juggled a number of concerns, including the needs of students and teachers and the perceptions of the community. For example, before school even opened, Wilkens changed the daily schedule for the primary grades, instituting a staggered schedule that facilitated small group instruction in reading. At the upper grade levels, however, he accepted the departmentalized structure that had been planned by the previous principal and allowed staff members a great deal of autonomy in working out the details. Then after having solicited parent and teacher opinions on departmentalization, he planned for the following year an even more elaborate class structure for the upper grades, which built upon the existing framework and which involved ability grouping in several subjects. Wilkens and the SIP coordinator took on the task of making student assignments according to this more complex structure.

Wilkens also dealt skillfully with the issue of teacher assignments, drawing on his knowledge of individual teachers to place them in positions that would strengthen the overall program and draw continued parent support. In fact, though all of the changes made by Wilkens could be traced to sound pedagogical principles, each was also geared to increase community support for the school by persuading parents that the academic program was uniformly good and did not vary greatly from teacher to teacher.

While we can list many of Wilkens's goals for instruction and the instructional organization at Berry Hill (in fact, the percentage of Wilkens's routine actions that were encompassed by the goal-setting category was second highest among the principals we studied), the overall impression among Berry Hill's teachers was that the school lacked direction. While the teachers were appreciative of the support and encouragement that they received from Wilkens, they also looked for more guidance and follow-through. They wanted more feedback about their teaching; they wanted him to take observations and lesson plans more seriously; they wanted more thorough in-service; they wanted him to arrange sharing among the staff.

Wilkens's "pulling" strategy and his pervasive use of modeling may provide the explanation here. Berry Hill's staff had been accustomed to the more overt authoritarian tactics of the previous principal. By contrast, Wilkens's leadership through suggestion may have been too subtle for some staff to recognize as leadership. Teachers may have perceived Wilkens's low-key manner and his modeling of appropriate behavior not as a strategy but simply as "the way he was." Hence, though they were willing to credit him with improving the atmosphere at the school, they did not so readily attribute to him improvements in the instructional program.

Nonetheless, Wilkens had presided over a number of changes at Berry Hill and had more planned for the future. His position as a newcomer, his personal style, and the ill-feeling created by his predecessor had led him to adopt a wait-and-see kind of approach in regard to full-scale changes. As we stated before, he had planted a great many seeds, and as the school year drew to a close, he seemed ready to take a more active role in promoting their growth.

Conclusion

We have described in great detail Berry Hill Elementary School. In doing so, we have presented a school community which was mostly White and well-to-do and which was quite active in issues related to the education of its children. This parental interest in education, however, did not necessarily translate into school loyalty. Berry Hill's parents often shopped for the best teacher among all the "hills" schools in the district and readily transferred their children to one of these schools if they found a teacher whom they preferred.

Teacher morale at the school had languished under the authoritarian management style of Wilkens's predecessor. The staff was far from cohesive and viewed with suspicion any efforts by administrators to impose new methods upon them. Despite parent dissatisfaction with some aspects of the school and despite declines in student scores on standardized tests, teachers at Berry Hill had shown no great initiative toward altering their instructional styles.

Louis Wilkens had come to Berry Hill charged with the task of turning around community and staff relations, and increasing the test scores of the school's children. He brought to this effort a belief in the potency of institutions and an awareness of the close relationship between climate and student achievement. Although describing himself as a specialist in human relations, Wilkens devoted the bulk of his actions toward making changes in the school's work structure.

Wilkens's manipulations of the school's work structure to improve school climate demonstrate the importance of flexibility to his management style. Often deciding that direct confrontations of problems would prove detrimental to overall school climate, Wilkens preferred indirect methods, refocusing attention from particular individuals to general aspects of the school's structure or, through humor, putting someone at ease, before attacking a problem. His tactics had indeed contributed to a greatly improved school climate, but his indirect, low-key style had given many staff members the impression that Wilkens was not a forceful instructional leader.

Equally important, our story of Wilkens and our categorizations of his routine actions have done a great deal toward supporting many of the ideas that emerged across the series of case studies. As some of the differences between our narrative and our more quantitative breakdowns of the data suggest, these methods do not simply duplicate one another, but clarify, qualify, or complicate the picture that each has drawn. Most of all, they lead one to ask "Why?" And in seeking an answer, one derives a more complete picture of what principals do in their settings to establish, maintain, or alter the systems in which they work.

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